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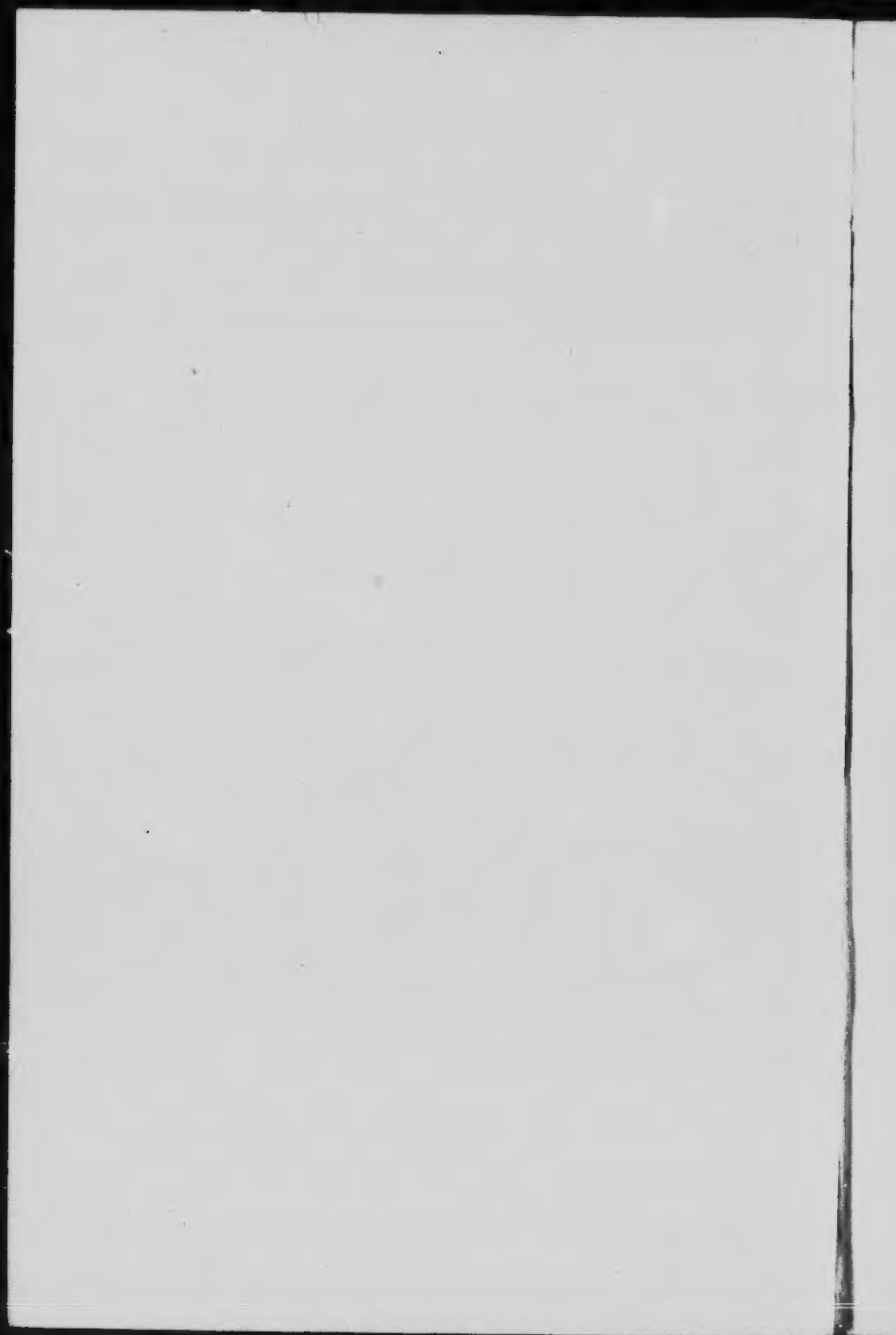
THE HERO OF ✠ HEROES ✠

A LIFE OF CHRIST
FOR YOUNG PEOPLE



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ROBERT F. HORTON M.A., D.D.



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Feb. 1913

THE HERO OF HEROES



"HE WORKED WITH HIS FATHER IN THE WORKSHOP"

[Frontispiece]

THE HERO OF HEROES

A LIFE OF CHRIST
FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

BY

ROBERT F. HORTON, M.A., D.D.

AUTHOR OF "THE OPEN SECRET," "GREAT ISSUES,"
"VERBUM DEI," ETC.

ILLUSTRATED BY JAMES CLARK, R.I.

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INTRODUCTION

I KNOW a house where, over the mantelpiece, is a print of Leonardo da Vinci's famous picture of the Last Supper, the picture now faded and defaced, on the wall of the refectory in the convent of S. Maria delle Grazie, at Milan.

In the house was a little boy of four, and no one had ever shown him the picture or said anything about it to him.

One day he suddenly said to his mother : "There's a King in that picture."

"What do you mean, John?" said his mother.

"There's a King in that picture," he repeated.

She picked him up in her arms and took him to the mantelpiece, and then he put his tiny finger on the figure of Jesus in the centre of the picture.

Jesus is seated at the table, and has just said to the twelve apostles that one of them will betray him. He wears no sign of kingship except the expression on his face. But that child had seen the King.

Now I hope the reader of this book, though a little child, will say : "There's a King in that picture."

It is the history of one who lived a lowly life of love and service, and died a shameful death.

But every one ought to be able to recognize the King.

There is a story about Leonardo's picture, that he had painted the faces of the Twelve, but could not paint the face of Jesus to his satisfaction. He went to his rest at night, anxious and troubled. In the morning the face as we know it was filled in.

Well, who but God could paint the portrait of this King? It is very difficult for us, because though we have three Gospels which give us many details of his word and work, and one Gospel which tries to show us, in the form of a narrative, his inner life, none of the four tells us the story, with dates and details such as we require for a biography. They give the events in different orders and different connections. We can only try to arrange them in a probable order and connection.

If you want to know more of the Hero of Heroes I recommend you to read Dr. David Smith's book, called *In the Days of His Flesh*. It is the best life of the Hero I know.

And if you want to picture Him yourself you must read every day of your life a little of the four Gospels, and try every day of your life to walk in his footprints.

We really know this Hero by obeying and loving him.

ROBERT F. HORTON.

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THE HERO OF HEROES

CHAPTER I

EARLY DAYS

IT was an inn at Bethlehem in Judæa; there was an open court in which the horses and the asses and the camels of the guests were tethered, eating at the troughs and the racks provided for the purpose. On three sides of the court there were rooms, without doors, and on the floors the travellers were cooking or eating or sleeping. It was all crowded, for an important Census was being taken by the order of Augustus, the Roman Emperor, and all the people who had been born in Bethlehem, or in any way belonged to it, were obliged to come to their native town to be enrolled. The inn, therefore, was full, and when Joseph arrived, with his young wife, Mary, there was no room for them to cook their food or sleep, except in the courtyard among the animals. Joseph belonged to Bethlehem, for he was descended

from David, who left his sheep at Bethlehem to become the first great king of Israel. But though he was sprung from kings, he was now a carpenter, living in the distant town of Nazareth in Galilee. There had been a long journey of four days, from Nazareth to Bethlehem, slow walking, or riding on the ass, along uneven tracks. But there was no room, and the tired travellers were obliged to settle themselves down on the ground.

That night a baby was born to Mary, and because there was no preparation for the event, she wrapped it up in such clothes as she had, and laid it in one of the troughs at which the animals were eating. The baby, who came into the world in this rough rude way, was the most wonderful child that ever was born. His parents both knew that he was not their child, but God's. Indeed Joseph hesitated to marry Mary because the child that was to be born was not his; and Mary had trembled with anxiety and fear at the strangeness of the birth. But in dreams they had been told that the child would be God's Son, and they were to have the honour and the joy of bringing him up as their own. Indeed Joseph's dream had been so distinct that he knew what the child's name was to be. He was to be called *Jesus*, which is the same as *Ioshua*, the Greek way of writing the

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"THERE HAD BEEN A LONG JOURNEY OF FOUR DAYS"

[To face p. 12]

Hebrew name. In Hebrew the word signifies saving; and in his dream Joseph saw that the saving in this case would be saving people from their sins.

You cannot imagine anything more simple or humble than this birth of the greatest person that ever lived on earth. Augustus the Emperor was building Rome of marble, and founding a mighty empire, which lasted for eighteen hundred years and leaves its marks on Europe and the whole world to-day. But that little child in the manger was going to build a nobler city than Rome, and to found a more lasting Empire. We do not date our time from Augustus, but from Jesus. Whenever we write the year in which we are living we mention that birth. B.C. means "Before Christ," and A.D. means "In the year of our Lord."

Eight days passed, and the child received the rite called circumcision; Christian children are baptized when Jewish boys are circumcised. Then, at the end of thirty-three days, the parents took the child to Jerusalem, and offered the turtle doves in the temple, as the Law required (Lev. xii.). There the child was received by two people, who lived in prayer, and were expecting Jesus. One of these was named Simeon; he had been told by the Holy Spirit that he would not die until he saw the Messiah,

or, as it is in Greek, Christ, who was coming. This devout man came into the temple just as Joseph and Mary were there; he took Jesus in his arms and gave thanks in a beautiful little hymn, which is sung every Sunday all over Christendom. It is called the *Nunc Dimittis*, from the two Latin words with which it begins. He was ready, he said, now to go, because he had looked upon the one who was to save, to save not Israel alone, but all the world (Luke ii. 29-32).

The other praying soul who recognized Jesus at once as the Redeemer was a very old woman, named Anna; she was a prophetess and had the vision. She was over a hundred years of age. It seemed like Jewish antiquity welcoming the new day that was dawning.

When Simeon held the child in his arms, he said some strange words to Mary, the young mother. The child would be the occasion of many Jews rising—Jews who would believe in him, and of many falling—Jews who would not believe. "And," he said, "a sword shall pierce through thine own soul; that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed." The Virgin from Nazareth had the sweetest and yet the saddest task which was ever given to a woman: she bore a son, who could yet not be her son; when he grew up and began to enter

on his great work he would have to break away from her, and say: "What have I to do with thee?"; he would have to declare that his mother and brethren were not those to whom he was related by blood, but those who did the will of God.

But with a tender woman's heart she cherished every event and every saying, and to her intimate friends she must have told the things that had happened. In Luke's Gospel we seem to hear the story, as she used to tell it; in Matthew's Gospel we seem to have the story as Joseph used to tell it. These beautiful stories are too perfect to be put into other words than those in which they were originally recorded. You must read and learn by heart Luke i. 5-ii. 20 and Matt. i. 18-ii. You may believe in the first case that you are listening to Mary, as she recounted the memorable days at Bethlehem, and told how the shepherds, those wild and lawless men of the open fields, had made their way that night to the inn, with a wonderful story of angels appearing to them and singing. An angel had said that the Saviour was born in David's city, and the choir had burst into praise: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and goodwill to men," or some such words. Shepherds had the repute in that country of being thieves: "their

craft is a craft of robbers," said the Rabbis, the religious teachers of the time. When such men came with such a tale every one wondered. And then Mary loved to tell how her cousin Elizabeth had gone through an experience like her own. She had borne a little son, who was afterwards John the Baptizer. The two women had spent three months together in the house of Zachariah, the husband of Elizabeth, and there Mary had sung that beautiful hymn which we call *Magnificat*, from the first word in the Latin version of it. It was a rapturous expression of gratitude for her happy lot in being the mother of the Saviour of the world. One other hymn which we sing Sunday by Sunday is found in these two beautiful chapters of Luke; it was composed by Zachariah, and celebrated the birth of John, who was to "go before the face" of Jesus to make known salvation from sin.

From the first two chapters of Matthew we see the birth from the side of Joseph. We hear of an extraordinary event which happened within the first two years of the birth. Joseph and Mary had taken a house at Bethlehem, and were living there. It was an easy matter then for a craftsman like Joseph to change his home and earn his living wherever he was with his carpenter's tools. They received a visit from

three magicians, men from the far East who practised magic, told fortunes, forecasted the future. It seems they had seen an unusual star which moved towards the west, and they followed it, believing that it marked the birth of a king. They travelled to Jerusalem, and terrified the tyrant Herod by saying that the star meant a King of the Jews who was just born. Herod, who had earned a terrible reputation by killing his wife Mariamne, and even his own sons, resolved to destroy this king, whoever he might be. From a passage in the prophet Micah (v. 2) it was supposed by the priests and students of the Law that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. While, therefore, the magicians went down to Bethlehem—which is only a few miles from Jerusalem—to offer their gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh to the infant king, Herod gave orders that all the children in Bethlehem under two years of age should be killed. In a dream Joseph was told to take the child and his mother over the border into Egypt. Herod died four years before the date which was fixed as A.D. 550 as the exact year of the birth of Jesus; strictly speaking, it was 5 B.C. that Jesus was born, and 4 B.C. that Herod died.

When Herod was dead Joseph and Mary and Jesus returned from Egypt, but as Herod's

son was reigning in Judæa, they returned to their Galilean home in Nazareth; and thus the childhood of Jesus was passed, not in the barren hill country around Jerusalem, but in the beauty and calm of Galilee. He is for all time Jesus of Nazareth.

CHAPTER II

NAZARETH

NAZARETH was, and still is, a small town in a cup of the hills overlooking the plain of Esdraelon, that plain, with Mount Carmel on the west, Mount Tabor on the east, and on the south the mountains of Samaria, on which so many of the great events of the Old Testament happened. Standing on the hill-top near Nazareth, you look down on the country at your feet, spread out like a map of Old Testament history. Thus Nazareth looked down upon a highway of the nations, and saw all the merchants and the armies and the travellers moving from Damascus to the sea, or going down into Egypt. At the time of which we are speaking, Galilee—Galilee of the Nations as it was called, because it was surrounded on all sides by Gentiles—Phœnicia, Decapolis, Samaria,—and even Carmel was Syrian—was crowded with people and busy with agriculture, fishing and trade. There were three millions of people

within a hundred square miles, so that to be in it then was almost like being in London.

But little Nazareth nestled away in the hills, and looked upon the movement of the peoples without sharing it.

The people were of many nationalities, Greeks, Romans, Asiatics, Europeans. Among them were a large number of Jews, who held aloof from the Gentiles in their peculiar manner. But these Jews were regarded in Jerusalem as Colonials are regarded in London: kinsmen, but with different tone and accent which made it possible immediately to distinguish them.

The country was, and is, very beautiful. The hills round the plain of Esdraelon are very much like the mountains about Capel Curig in North Wales. But there is this difference: in the spring they are carpeted with wild flowers, anemones, irises, cyclamens, lilies, so that there is no lovelier sight in the world than the country where Jesus lived in the coming of spring. As a child he loved to mark the flowers and the birds. Meleager, the first Greek poet to write about flowers, came from Gadara. It would be hardly possible to live in Galilee without thinking and, if one had the power, writing about them.

The whole country, hills and plain, with the

deep Sea of Galilee lying far below like a jewel embedded in the circling mountains, is a poem, a poem of flowers.

In that lovely poem of the Old Testament called the Song of Songs, the exquisite descriptions of Nature are taken from Galilee—it was in a country such as is there described that Jesus grew up. And yet neither the country nor the town of Nazareth was held in honour among the Jews. They scorned the idea of a religious teacher—a prophet—coming from Galilee; though Elijah and Elisha and Jonah and Nahum had come from that part of the land; and Paul, like his Master, was of Galilean origin: he came from Gishkala (John vii. 52). And even in Galilee Nazareth had a bad reputation (John i. 46). To be called a Nazarene was not a mark of honour until Jesus bore the name. Since he lived there as a boy and a young man, that "White City on the Hill" has become a place of pilgrimage for all nations.

When I went to visit Nazareth, the first thing I did was to go to the well which is called after the mother of Jesus. A beautiful fountain of pure cold water dashes out of a marble portal. It was evening, and all the women, with pitchers on their heads, came to fetch the water for their households. They were doing just what Mary did each day; they were dressed

just as she was, in gay colours, with a white veil thrown over the head. Then, walking up to the height above the town to see the place where the people of Nazareth afterwards tried to throw Jesus down from the hill, I met a little boy, twelve years of age, with beautiful olive complexion, shining black eyes, and dark curly hair. He spoke to me in English. He had been taught in the Christian school. And as I looked at him I thought that just such a boy had Jesus been when he lived in this town.

Though Jesus was the eldest, Joseph and Mary had other children. There were four brothers, named James, Joseph, Judas, and Simon, and some sisters, whose names we do not know (Matt. xiii. 55; Mark vi. 3). Though Mary knew the wonder of the birth of her eldest boy, his brothers and sisters did not recognize him as extraordinary (John vii. 3-5; Mark iii. 21, 31). But it was evidently a happy family, and a happy childhood. Joseph, as long as he lived, behaved as a true father to Jesus; and the word "father" was always the dearest name in the child's heart. Martin Luther had a father who was harsh and cruel, and used to beat him, until the prayer "Our Father" made him shudder. But Jesus thought of a father as one who would certainly give every good thing to

his child, and would never dream of deceiving him. Mary was a tender mother; perhaps it was from her lips that he heard the endearing word which he afterwards used, *Talitha*, which means "my lamb."

The school to which Jesus went was attached to the synagogue; it was called "the house of the book." There the boys sat on the ground, and their master sat on a stool in their midst. They learnt by heart the words of the Law and the Prophets and the Psalms. The Jews thought a great deal of the education of their children. One Rabbi said that a father had as well bury his son as neglect his instruction. Another said: "He who learns as a lad, to what is he like? To ink written on fresh paper. And he who learns when old, to what is he like? To ink written on used paper." Another said: "The world exists by the breath of school-children."

Then there was the home training. Joseph was a carpenter by trade, and Mary was a woman of the people; but as pious Jews they would talk of the teaching of the Law in the house, in the workshop, and in the ordinary conversation of the day (Deut. vi. 6, 7).

Thus Jesus grew up full of the religious knowledge of his time and country. He knew a great deal of the Old Testament, and a great

deal of the teaching which the Rabbis, or Jewish teachers, had added to it. He regarded that Old Testament—or, as it was then called, the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms,—with great respect. He always taught and believed that it could not be broken, that not even a tiny letter, the “i,” nor a mark of distinction, a tittle, could pass away. As a boy he gained a great love of the ancient writings, and of God from whom they came.

Though he worked with his father in the shop, making the yokes and the ploughs which were needed by the country folk, or the furniture which was used in the town, he had a great desire for a fuller knowledge than he could gain at school. There was a college—House of the Midrash, it was called—at Jabne, but his parents could not afford to send him there. The chief House of the Midrash was at Jerusalem; and the boy waited for the opportunity to see there the distinguished professors of the day, such as Gamaliel, at whose feet Paul sat (Acts xxii. 3). He longed to “powder himself in the dust of the wise,” as the saying went, because the students sat on the floor about their master’s feet.

At last his opportunity came. Every year Joseph and Mary went up to Jerusalem to the Feast of the Passover. It was a journey of

three or four days. I myself have taken that journey by the same track, in the same slow, laborious way; and the journey from Nazareth to Jerusalem brings back the boyhood of Jesus more vividly than any description. At the age of twelve a boy became a Son of the Law, and it was his duty to go to the feast with his elders.

It was the year A.D. 8, as we calculate, when the boy of twelve, with his parents, joined the cavalcade that was going up to the holy city for the Feast of the Passover. It was the month of April, the first flush of that lovely spring. The cuckoo's note sounded across the vale. They passed through oliveyards, and fields with the sprouting crops. The air was laden with the perfume of the fruit blossoms, oranges, pomegranates, figs, apricots, vines. All the world was rejoicing, and the grateful people were going up to praise God—you may catch the spirit of the journey from Ps. cxxii.—because he brought them out of Egypt, when the Paschal lamb was slain and the blood was sprinkled on the portals.

The men went in separate companies from the women. Perhaps the boy travelled up with the women and back with the men; for in this journey he entered upon his manhood.

There was a dense crowd at Jerusalem. Two million seven hundred thousand pilgrims would

come up for the feast. It was very easy for a boy to be lost in the crowd.

In the colonnade of the great temple was the House of the Midrash, where the Rabbis lectured and gave instruction to students in the Law. This was what attracted Jesus. Not the sights of the city, not even the splendid buildings of the temple, but the Law of his God, his Heavenly Father, was his delight. Here he spent his time putting questions which astonished the learned professors. The thoughts of a boy are long, long thoughts. But the thoughts of this boy were such as had not been in anybody's heart before. He felt that he belonged to this House of God, his Father's house, as he called it. He had a movement of spirit within him which told him that he was dedicated to make this teaching of the Law what it had never been—the means of saving the world. He felt that he was a dedicated being, a consecrated spirit.

When the feast was over, the cavalcade set out for Galilee again. Joseph, thinking that Jesus was with his mother, and Mary, thinking that he was with his father, did not notice that he had been left behind. After the first day's journey they missed him, and turned back to the crowded city. Strange to say, they sought him everywhere except in the temple. There

at last they found him; and they were naturally grieved with him for causing them so much anxiety. But something in the boy's manner rebuked them. "Do you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" he asked. It was a note of warning; it showed the parents that with his manhood was coming his mission. He must separate from them in order to carry out the work for which he had come into the world.


But the most wonderful thing is that, after seeing what he had to do, he went back with his parents to Nazareth, and was the same humble and dutiful son as before. And there for eighteen years he lived in the home, in the shop, just like an ordinary townsman of Nazareth. He watched the ways of the household, and the habits of men in their common life; he went to the synagogue every sabbath, to learn and not to teach. He gave no sign of the work which he was going to do. He waited God's time and God's signal in that obscure and despised town of Nazareth.

CHAPTER III

JESUS BECOMES CHRIST

THE event which drew Jesus out of his quiet and dutiful retirement at Nazareth, and launched him upon his life-work, happened when he was thirty years of age. It was this: his second cousin, John, the son of Zachariah and Elizabeth, had appeared before the world as a prophet. This boy, who was just the same age as Jesus, had been brought up near Jerusalem, in a town which was probably called Juttah (Luke i. 39), and therefore the boys may never have met. His father was a priest, and had been told from the beginning that John (the very name was given to him from God) was to do a remarkable work in the world. The child, therefore, was dedicated as a Nazirite, one who would never touch wine or strong drink, and would never cut his hair.

We often in picture galleries see beautiful pictures representing Jesus and John as little boys about the knees of Mary. John has a rough skin-coat on his shoulder and carries a



little cross. He is usually pointing to his cousin, Jesus. These pictures show us in what relation the two stood to each other at the time of which we are now speaking, but when the painters showed them together as children, they only drew upon their imagination. When John, the priest's son, was a man of thirty, he felt the Spirit of God upon him, moving him to leave the town and go into the desert country beyond the river Jordan. There he lived a simple and lonely life, wearing a rough camel-hair garment bound about him with a girdle of leather, and eating only what could be found in the desert, the fruit of a small shrub, which was called "locust," and the honeycombs of wild bees. Much in his appearance reminded people of the ancient prophet Elijah, and presently his preaching and teaching completed the resemblance (2 Kings i. 8). John chose the places where great prophets had been, that he might recall their work and walk in their steps; by the brook Cherith, which runs down into the Jordan past Jericho, Elijah had been fed by the ravens (1 Kings xvii. 2-7); in the desert south of Jerusalem Amos had heard in the roar of the lions the still more awful voice of God. But the place which John chose as his chief centre of work was Bethany, beyond Jordan, just at the point where the Israelites had first

entered the Promised Land by crossing the river, and had left the great stones in the river-bed as a reminder of the event. Here the wild, solitary prophet of the desert appeared, and called men to repent, because a great day was at hand.

There had not been a prophet of this kind for four hundred years. One of the familiar Psalms (lxxiv. 9) said: "We see not our signs; there is no more any prophet; neither is there among us any that knoweth how long." Now here was a real prophet, speaking in the spirit and power of Elijah. His preaching was like Whitfield's. When that great preacher spoke to the Kingswood colliers, they were so moved that the tears made little channels down their coal-begrimed faces. Such was the effect which John produced. People crowded to him from all sides. The religious authorities of Jerusalem, priests and scribes, came to him; the leaders of the most strict and pious of the Jews, the Pharisees, came to him. Bad and outcast people came. Even soldiers came and asked him what they must do. There was a great commotion.

In the fields of Judæa, when the stubble was burned for the sowing, the little vipers would often wriggle out to escape the flames. John pointed to these terrified reptiles, and told the

people that they would presently be trying to escape from the wrath to come in the same way (Luke iii. 7). The people were terrified, and when they wished to give up their sins and to begin a better life, he brought them one by one down to the river, bade them enter its waters, and then, plunging them under the flood, he called them to step out as cleansed and renewed hearts, to live justly and charitably and purely.

This was the baptism of John. People thought, surely this stern, strong prophet must be the Messiah (in Greek the Christ) whom the Jews were always expecting to restore their ancient glory and to deliver them from the Romans, who then ruled them. But when they asked him if he was Christ, he said no; he was (quoting the old prophecy of Isaiah) the voice crying in the wilderness to make ready the way of the Lord. He was a forerunner of some one else. That other, he said, was in their midst, though they did not know him. To identify that other was the great object of his preaching and of his mission.

To this wonderful and unexpected ministry people flocked, not only from Jerusalem, but from distant Galilee. Especially did they come from the busy cities on the shores of the Lake of Gennesareth. Bethsaida was one of these cities, on the left bank of the river where

it entered the lake.¹ Five young men had come from Bethsaida down the road by the river to Bethany, and were among the astonished and repentant hearers of the prophet. Their names were Andrew, Simon, Philip, Nathanael, and John. The first and the last enrolled themselves as disciples.

Jesus left his quiet home at Nazareth, and came to Bethany among the rest. No one noticed him specially. But John was filled with the Spirit of God, and was told by the Spirit that he would find that other in the crowd, and would know him by what would happen at his baptism. John, speaking in the rapt language of prophecy, directly Jesus appeared coming to him in the crowd, exclaimed, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Every morning and every evening in the temple a lamb was sacrificed for the sins of the people. But here was one who would be sacrificed for the sin, not of the Jews alone, but of the whole world.

Jesus came up to John and asked to be baptized. But the great prophet hesitated. What sin had he done? What had he to repent of? "No," he said, "I need to be baptized by you; I am not worthy to take off your shoes." Jesus

¹ Possibly, however, the Bethsaida from which the five came was the port of Capernaum.

looked good and noble and great. But John, as a prophet, saw more than met the eye. Jesus did not say that he must repent or confess any sin. But he was born under the Law; he would submit to this rite of the last of the prophets; he would take his place among sinful men. "Suffer it now," he said, "for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness."

Jesus entered the water, and as John baptized him, both he and John saw and heard something which only they could see and hear; but it made them both sure that Jesus was the Christ. It was as if the heavens opened, and a dove came down upon Jesus, and a voice said: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

A Jewish tradition is mentioned by Justin Martyr that "the Messiah would not know himself nor have any power until Elijah came and made him manifest to all." This was what had now happened. John the Baptist was the Elijah who, by the spirit of prophecy given to him, recognized his own cousin Jesus as Messiah, and Jesus, by the recognition of John, knew himself, and from that moment approached his task, the task for which he had come into the world.

This beginning is what we imitate when we are baptized, and by confessing Christ and

being enrolled in his Church we walk in his footsteps.

We are very fortunate in having an account of what happened on the following two days in the first chapter of John, where everything is told so particularly that we feel as if it came from one who was present. As a marriage with a virgin was always on the fourth day of the week—as we should say, Wednesday—the journey to Galilee was on Monday, and what we are now going to notice would be on Sunday. On that first day of the week, John was standing with his two disciples, Andrew and, as it seems, John, when Jesus came up. Again, as on the previous day, the Spirit of God came upon the prophet, and he repeated his announcement: "Behold the Lamb of God!" The two, Andrew and John, left the side of their master and went after Jesus. Jesus turned and gazed on them with a look which could never be forgotten, and asked them what they sought. It was ten o'clock in the morning. What they wanted was to know him and be with him for the day. But, abashed by his look and his question, they said: "Master, where do you lodge?" They at once called him Master, *i. e.* Rabbi, the name given to the regular Jewish teacher. Jesus brought them to his place, probably a lodge in the wilderness, and the first

Christian Sunday was spent by Jesus and his first two disciples in talk which we would give all the world to know. All we know is that one of the two, Andrew, could not let the day pass before he had found his brother Simon and told him that he and John had found the Messiah. Andrew brought Simon to the quiet retreat, and Jesus, as soon as he saw him, said: "You are Simon the son of John; you shall be called Cephas." Cephas means a rock, which in Greek is Petros. Jesus gave to this new disciple the name of Rock because he was going to be the founder of the Church.

On the next day, Monday, Jesus and his new friends set out for Galilee, because they had been invited to a marriage in Cana, a town very near to Nazareth, for Wednesday, and it would take them all that time to get there. As they journeyed back to the north, Philip and Nathanael were already in the way. They had heard what John had said about Jesus, but they had not joined themselves to him as Andrew and John, and afterwards Simon, had done. But Jesus saw Philip, walking perhaps alone, and went up to him and said: "Follow me." There was something in the look of Jesus which made him obey gladly. Nathanael was on in front resting under a fig-tree. He was in doubt. With the local prejudice of Galilee, he could

not think how a man of Nazareth, that despised town, could be a religious teacher. But Philip came up to him, and said in the eagerness of his new faith: "We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and the Prophets did write." Philip's enthusiasm bore down his doubt, and he hurried him to Jesus, Nathanael's own doubt vanished entirely away when Jesus showed his knowledge of him by saying: "Behold an Israelite indeed in whom is no guile." Struck by a sudden feeling of wonder and gladness, he said: "Master, you are the Son of God, you are the King of Israel." We can see that in these first days of his call and ministry Jesus looked and spoke in a way which carried everything before him. It was the pure and passionate conviction of God with him. He knew that he had come from God and was about the work of God. These five young men were fascinated, and when he called them to follow him they did not hesitate. He was full of a solemn confidence, and seemed to see into the future. Had Nathanael believed because Jesus had seen him under the fig-tree? He should see greater things than these. Turning to the five of them, he said, using a word which he often used afterwards: "Amen, amen,"—or, as it is translated, Verily, verily—"ye shall see the heaven opened, and the

angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

It was a figure of speech. As John the Baptizer had seen the dove descend upon him by the Jordan, so these his new friends and disciples would see the powers of God working on him and in him in the days that were coming. Nathanael, in his wonder and joy, had called Jesus Son of God; but Jesus calls himself Son of Man. We are always asking why he called himself by that name. For the present we may say that he chose that name, just as he asked to be baptized, in order to be one with men. There was something, as we have already seen, very extraordinary about him. John had marked him out as Messiah. These young Galileans were drawn to him by a look or a word. They might easily begin to think that he was a being from another sphere, not a man, but God. He therefore called himself the Son of Man. In the Psalms (viii. 4; cxliv. 3) the term describes man in his weakness. The prophet Ezekiel is called "son of man" sixty times, in contrast with God. He would take his place with men. Messiah was called "the son of the fallen" from Amos ix. 11. He was not here to exalt himself, but to be meek and lowly of heart.

And yet that name in Dan. vii. 13 was

applied to the One who was to come and from God to receive the everlasting dominion, the kingdom which should not be destroyed. The lowly title would be crowned with honour. Yes, as he says on this first occasion of using the term which he used so constantly of himself, but which his followers could never bring themselves to apply to him : "Ye shall see the heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon

THE SON OF MAN."

CHAPTER IV

TEMPTATION

BUT now, before we go with Jesus to the marriage and while the little company is traveling northwards, we have to look into a dark passage of his life which he must have shown them himself, for he had to pass through it alone. It was his custom from the first to speak to men in parables. He taught the hidden things of the spirit by painting clear pictures of outward things. And when he wished to tell his friends the temptation which came to him in the wilderness directly he knew himself to be, and was recognized by the Baptizer as, the Messiah, he put it all in the form of an outward scene. We shall best understand his temptation by following the story as he must have told it.

There is a great rocky wall where the desert of Judæa looks over Jericho and the valley of the Jordan; the cliff is honeycombed with caves, and the desolate country, strewn with stones, melts away into the mountains of Ephraim. The name of this solitude was Quarantaria;

and here, it was said, the temptation of Jesus took place. But vainly do we search the atlas for the scene of the temptation. It took place in the spirit of Jesus; where his body was, did not matter; it might have been among the crowds that flocked to the baptism, or with the little group of disciples that was gathering around him. All that took place was in the region of the spirit—the wilderness was that strange inner world of the heart where all our temptations take place, haunted by beasts *and* angels. Therefore the earliest account we have of the description which Jesus gave of what happened simply says: "And straightway the Spirit driveth him forth into the wilderness. And he was in the wilderness forty days tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts, and the angels ministered unto him" (Mark i. 12, 13).

"Forty days" was a figure of speech for a long time. The rain of the Flood was on the earth for forty days (Gen. vii. 12). The time that Moses spent on the Mount with God was forty days (Deut. ix. 9). The spies were forty days in searching the Promised Land (Num. xiii. 25). Elijah went in the strength of the angels' food forty days (1 Kings xix. 8). Ezekiel lay on his side for forty days, to bear the iniquity of his people (Ezek. iv. 6).

For such a period the temptation of Jesus lasted.

The tempter is called Satan, or Diabolus. By this is meant that voice within which urges us to do wrong, puts evil thoughts into our minds, and even destroys us like a roaring lion, if we do not resist and refuse the suggestions. The wild beasts are those bad passions within us which rage and tear and devour. I have seen a lovely picture of Jesus seated on the rocks in his temptation, and the wild beasts, lions and panthers and jackals, steal up to him and pause, as if in astonishment and fear, not daring to come near him. But the picture is only a figure. The wild beasts were not to be seen by mortal eye. The angels are those pure, white-winged thoughts which come to us straight from God, with cheer and comfort, when we have overcome.

We cannot know more of the temptation of Jesus than he chose to tell us. But if we think of what he told us, we begin to understand what came to him in those days of his ordeal. *First* of all the tempter spread before his eyes all the kingdoms of the world. He saw not only his little Jewish country and Galilee, but the great Roman Empire, in Europe, Asia and Africa. He saw the kingdoms of the East, India, China and Japan. He saw the undis-

covered continents of America and Australia, and all the islands of the sea. Knowing from his baptism that he was the Son of God, and had come into the world to save all nations, he wondered whether he should take the world's way of conquest. Should he be like Judas the Galilean, who had come forward to liberate the Jews? Should he be a Messiah such as every one was expecting, a Judas Maccabæus, or a David?

This would be to worship the Prince of this world. But should he ally himself with the religious leaders of his people, the Sanhedrin? Should he side with the Sadducees, or priestly party, or with the Pharisees, the pious party, or with the Herodians, the party that supported Herod as the national king? That would be an easy and a popular way. But alas! it would be to worship the Prince of this world, as much as if he claimed to be the Messiah who was generally expected. Then, should he forsake his own little people and turn to the Gentiles? Should he claim the throne of the Roman Empire and be the follower of Cæsar, the first great emperor, or of Alexander, the world's conqueror? All these ways of carrying out his work came before him. If he would bow to the world's Prince and take the world's way, his course would be plain.

But one thing gave him the victory. It was the text in Deuteronomy : "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." The whole tempting pageant of the kingdoms was swept aside. He would win those kingdoms only in God's way. There was a description of God's Messiah in Isa. lxi. 1-3, not as a conquering king, but as a preacher of good tidings to the meek, binding up the brokenhearted, liberating captives, proclaiming the acceptable year of the Lord. Such a Messiah would he be, and not the Messiah that the world expected. As he thought over those ancient scriptures, Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms, he was sure that he had come to *suffer* for men, not to reign, or rather to reign only by his suffering (Luke xxiv. 26).

The tempter was silenced; that point was settled once for all. He would not ally himself with the world; he would not rely on the world, but on God alone.

Second: but the tempter returned with another suggestion. If he would only rely on God and depend on Him, let him show his trust by claiming His miraculous help in every step of his work. He saw himself on the parapet of the temple which overlooked the valley of the Kedron, the very parapet from which, thirty-eight years later, his brother James was hurled

as a martyr for him (Eus. *Hist.* ii. 23). He was the Son of God. The promise was plain in Ps. xci. 11, 12. God would give His angels charge over him if he leapt from the parapet; they would bear him up, that he should not dash his foot against a stone. Such a daring act would win the people, and would make him himself sure that God was with him. But the tempter's voice was silenced with another text from Deuteronomy (vi. 16): "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." No, he would trust God without a miracle. He would face danger where it was necessary, sure that God could rescue him, but he would not run into danger in order to claim the help. He would not work miracles for himself. He would not seek to win the people by signs. He would go along life's common way in cheerful godliness—not as a wonder-worker, or as one whom God was always helping, but as one who found God in everything, even in the ordinary laws of nature.

Third: the time of the temptation was drawing to an end, and he was more than conqueror. But the tempter had another suggestion. If he would not count on God to do great wonders, such as saving him from death when he leapt down into the deep valley of the Kedron, he might at least expect his Father to provide for

him the necessary bread, even if it meant turning a stone of the desert into a loaf. Might he not have the security of daily bread, and escape the pangs of hunger in carrying out his work? But again Deuteronomy came to his aid (viii. 3): God had taught men they are not to live by bread alone, but by the words that proceed out of the mouth of God. This was the bread he meant to live by (John iv. 32). His bread would be to do the will of Him that sent him and to accomplish His work.

If it should be necessary, for pity's sake, to feed a hungry multitude, nay, even if, as we shall see in the next chapter, it would add to the joy of a wedding feast to provide wine, he would avail himself of the divine power which was given to him as the Son of God. But not for himself; no, he would not even provide his daily bread by raising himself above the lot of men. He would suffer with us, be hungry with us, depend, as we do, on the uncertain harvest and the fitful rains. He was a man among men. He would do his divine work by being a man while his human life lasted.

This, then, was the temptation of Jesus, and this was his victory. He was the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world; he resolved to live and work with the harmlessness and gentleness of a lamb. He would do every-

thing in reliance on God alone, not asking God to work miracles for him, or to sustain him otherwise than men are sustained, but manfully and heroically bearing man's lot and man's burden.

CHAPTER V

MANIFESTING GLORY

WE left Jesus with his five young friends, Andrew, John, Simon, Philip and Nathanael, on their way to Galilee. They were going to a wedding, and wished to arrive on Wednesday, the fourth day of the week, on which the marriage of a virgin always took place.

Cana is a town, four miles over the hills, north-east of Nazareth. It is very likely that the bride or the bridegroom was a relation of Mary, for she evidently felt some anxiety that all should go well at the marriage supper.

But when we ask why Jesus, with his five disciples, wished to accept the invitation and to be at the feast, we cannot say that it was merely as a friend or a relative that he came. Fresh from the solemn and wonderful experience of the Jordan and of the wilderness, knowing now that he was Messiah, and clear about the way in which he was to do his work, he went to the marriage—why? Because all through his life he had before him the picture of a great

marriage to which he was inviting the world, and the question was, Would the guests come? Would they put on the festal robe provided for them? This was the form in which his work appeared to him. He was the bridegroom; he was going to bring into his Father's house the bride—the Church—a pure and spotless bride. There would be the attendants, virgins, to accompany the bride, who would long to come into the marriage, but might be unprepared. With such thoughts floating in his mind, he wished to attend this domestic feast as the first opportunity of showing the glory which was around him, the glory which the Son of Man was bringing into human life.

The custom was for the bridegroom to provide the feast at the bride's house. It began in the evening, after sunset. Then, at midnight, the bridegroom carried the bride away in a marriage procession to his own house and her new home. There was another custom in the ancient world which needs explanation. When a banquet or feast was made, one of the guests was chosen by the host to be the master of the ceremonies, the ruler of the feast. This was a great compliment, and any man was pleased to serve in that capacity. And thus Jesus, son of Sirach, says in his famous book: "Have they made thee ruler of a feast? Be

not lifted up. Be thou among them as one of them. Take thought for them and so sit down. And when thou hast done all thy office, take thy place, that thou mayst be gladdened on their account, and receive a crown for thy well ordering" (Ecclus. xxxii. 1, 2).

At this wedding feast to which Jesus had come with the five that night, a "ruler of the feast" was chosen, but it was not he. Only his mother and his new disciples had any notion of who and what he was. He lay at the table, with the other guests, enjoying it all with them, and very eager to add to their enjoyment. He had his own thoughts about the mystical meaning of the marriage, but to all appearance he was only a wedding guest cheerful and kind, and full of good wishes to the bride and bridegroom.

All went well far on into the evening, and then a discovery was made which filled Mary with anxiety for the credit of the house—the wine was running short. Now, Mary had formed the habit ever since the death of Joseph, her husband, of telling her eldest son everything, and of appealing to him in every difficulty. She therefore whispered to him now what a difficulty their hosts were in. His way of taking the information filled her with wonder and confidence. He spoke to her as he had

never done before. His mission had come to him, his Messiahship was clear. His words thrilled her through—perhaps it was like a sword piercing her heart with the truth that there was now and henceforth a gap between them. He was no longer Mary's son, but the world's redeemer. He spoke as if she were a stranger, "Lady," he said, "we have different ends in view now: I must watch the time for my work, and obey the divine call." I venture to give the meaning of his words because, as they appear in John ii. 4, translated literally into English, they give an impression of harshness and rudeness which the original does not convey. Mary did not feel them harsh. She only recognized in a moment that her son was apart from her, come from God, to do God's work in the world. She therefore told the attendants to do whatever he commanded. She was quite sure that he would get them out of the difficulty, as he had for many years got her out of her difficulties and comforted her in her troubles.

There were in the court of the house, on to which the feast-room opened, six huge stone jars. Each of them held twenty or thirty gallons. They were not used for drinking, but for washing, purposes. Jesus told the servants to fill these pots with water. Then he told them

to draw from one of the vessels and to offer the cup to the ruler of the feast. The water had become wine, delicious wine. The ruler of the feast had no idea how the wine had come; he was only astonished that such good wine should have been kept to the last, for, as he said to the bridegroom, the usual custom was to give the best wine first, when the palate was fresh, and to use the inferior qualities at the end, when the guests would not notice it. No explanation was given. Neither host nor guests knew to whom they were indebted for this unexpected treat. Only Mary and the five disciples knew that Jesus had done it, and their hearts went out to him in a loving confidence that he would always provide, that he would be able at all times to turn the water of life into wine, and to keep the best until the last.

I have seen two very pretty lines about this wonderful event at Cana—

"The modest water, touched by power divine,
Confessed its Lord, and blushed itself to wine."

We have come to regard intoxicating drinks with fear and censure, because they are the cause of misery and suffering in modern life; we are therefore puzzled that the transformation of water into wine should be described as manifesting the glory of Jesus, the Messiah. But this is one of the many cases in which we

are obliged to put ourselves back into the time in which things happened, and to look at events as they would strike those who saw them. The vine and the grape were regarded as God's good gift to men. As He gave bread to feed them and oil to make their face to shine, so he gave wine to gladden their hearts. When Jesus turned the water into wine, he brought joy into the hearts of the guests, and showed that his great purpose in life was to make men glad. He was very unlike John, from whom he had received baptism and taken his two earliest disciples. John was an ascetic. He lived on bare fare, and never touched wine in his life. But Jesus, closely connected as he was with the Creator of all, wished men to enjoy all things; he would make life even here as happy as possible. He did not wish to cause any tears except the tears of penitence for sin; he did not wish to take away a single joy except those pleasures, such as drunkenness, which lead to miseries greater than themselves. He struck the new note at once. This was his thought in coming: to give joy and gladness more than when the corn and wine increase.

People were sure to misunderstand him; and they did. They called him "glutton and wine-bibber," and said that he came "eating and drinking." For, strange to say, men have

always thought that to be religious is to be gloomy, to starve, to abstain from the pleasures which this beautiful world offers to us. They can hardly believe in a saint unless he is pale and thin and faint. But Jesus took his own course. God, he was sure, had given us all things richly to enjoy, and he wished to put men into the happy mood of enjoying what God had given. He knew, of course, that the good things could be abused; but his cure for abuse was the right use of them. His whole object was to make men happy—or, as it is usually translated in the Gospel, blessed; he had come with good news: that is the meaning of the word Gospel. He would lead us all to the only sources of happiness, which lie in goodness and in God.

Thus we can understand why the first wonderful work he did was this of giving joy to a marriage party. We see that his glory, which was so manifested, was unlike the glory of earthly sovereigns and potentates. His glory was not in enjoying, but in giving joy; his glory was in turning the common things into treasures, and making the end better than the beginning. He who would by no means turn a stone into bread in order to stave off his own hunger would readily turn water into wine in order to make others glad.

CHAPTER VI

THE PASSOVER OF A.D. 26

AFTER the miracle of Cana Jesus preferred to leave the neighbourhood. His plan was to make his centre of preaching and teaching at Capernaum, on the lake, the neighbourhood from which his first followers had come. As the head of his family he took with him Mary and his brothers and sisters as well as the five, and journeyed across the hills, about a day's journey, until the party came to Capernaum. But it was now April, the sweet month of flowers, and the time of the Passover. Probably he had been up many times for the Passover in the past eighteen years; but there was no doubt that he must go to Jerusalem now. He must keep the Passover with his brethren according to the flesh, and with his new disciples; he must make the beginning of his work at the great national assembly of his people. It would not do to lose any time in showing what he understood that he as Messiah must do.

I think he left his family and his disciples,

and went up on this solemn errand all alone. On his arrival, four days after starting, he went to the temple, where, as a boy of twelve, he had talked with the Rabbis. He no longer came to learn, but to teach. Things which before he had taken as matter of course struck him now in a new light.

The great temple court presented an extraordinary scene. It was thronged with thousands of pilgrims, who had come up for the feast. There were bulls and sheep and goats and pigeons for the sacrifices, so that it appeared more like a great market than a place of worship; and to make the resemblance closer, there were money-changers plying their trade at their desks. For every Israelite was bound to bring the poll tax to the temple—half a shekel; that is, about one and threepence; and coming from many parts of the world, the visitors had to change their money.

The whole scene now struck Jesus as utterly irreligious. The prophet had said, "Every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holy unto the Lord of hosts: and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them and seethe therein; and in that day there shall be no more a *trader* in the house of the Lord of hosts" (Zech. xiv. 21, margin). This shameless trading could not exist without the permission of the temple

authorities; and indeed we know that the priests made large sums of money by granting concessions to the cattle merchants, the dove sellers, and the bankers. The system had gradually grown up, and was so established that no one observed what it meant; and the authorities were so strong in the power conferred by custom, and by a supposed divine appointment, that no one would have ventured to do or say anything, even if the thought had occurred that it was wrong.

But Jesus was full of the thought that this temple was his Father's house. And his mind brooded over the words of the scripture which declared its sanctity. He knew no fear in the cause of God. With the eager impetuosity of young manhood, he set about the reformation that was needed with his own hands. Entering the temple court, he suddenly seized some fragments of rope that lay about, and twisted them into a whip. With this he drove the cattle out of the court, and in doing so overturned the tables of the money-changers, so that their money rolled on the floor. He did not touch the men themselves; but with burning words of authority he told the sellers of the pigeons to take their stock outside—"Make not my Father's house a house of merchandise," he cried. Everything seemed to go down before

his fiery zeal. No one dared to touch him or oppose him. The authorities felt guilty. Every Israelite there knew, directly the burning word was spoken, that Jesus was right, the temple was dishonoured by the traffic. The people sided with him, and thought of the old saying of the Psalmist: "The zeal of thy house shall eat me up." It must also have struck them, as they saw his commanding manner, and all the defiling things go down before him, how the latest prophet three centuries before had said: "The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple. . . . But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap" (Mal. iii. 1, 2).

But if the authorities did not dare to interfere they were angry enough at this interference with themselves and their rights. They confronted him with a demand for his credentials. Who was he? What sign could he give that he had the right to cleanse the temple thus? Perhaps he could have given them a sign, some miraculous work which would strike wonder into all. But the temptation to give such a sign had been overcome once for all. He would use the divine power entrusted to him for the relief and help of sufferers—such signs he was always giving—but he would not use it to establish his

personal claim; that must rest on another ground altogether. Instead, therefore, of offering a sign he uttered a word which silenced them by its very strangeness: "Break up this sanctuary," he said, laying his hand on his body, "and in three days I will raise it up." In that first challenge of his authority, made by the rulers of his people, he had a sudden conviction that they would one day kill him, and he would rise from the grave. Strange to say, this figurative language was distorted, and used as a ground of accusation against him three years later. It was represented by some who professed to have heard him that he threatened to destroy the temple of Herod, which had taken forty-six years to build, and to rebuild it in three days! We do not wonder that the accusers at the trial could not make this absurd perversion of what he meant hang together (Matt. xxvi. 60, 61).

Whatever the authorities might do or say, this striking act of cleansing the temple awoke in the people a belief that he was Messiah. John's testimony to him was talked about, and this bold and noble act was in accordance with it. All the "signs" he did agreed. And many believed on his name: that is, Messiah. There was a widespread feeling that this reformer whom John had baptized might be the

deliverer, the leader, the king, whom pious Israelites were expecting. But of course the belief was very superficial and inconstant. And Jesus had a wonderful power of reading the thoughts of men. Though, therefore, they were confiding in him as Messiah, he could not yet confide in them. Much had to be said and done, and great changes had to take place in the thoughts of the people, before Jesus could let them use that name Messiah of him.

But there was one man in Jerusalem, very different in spirit and in knowledge from the people, and especially from the ruling and teaching class, to which he belonged. His name was Nicodemus. He was distinguished enough to be called "the Teacher of Israel" (John iii. 10), or a Rabbi of well-known learning, who ought to have known the truths of religion well. But though he was ignorant of the truth which was burning in the heart of Jesus, he had one great virtue—he was willing to learn and to inquire. He was convinced, by the "signs" which Jesus showed, that here was a teacher come from God. That noble and zealous purification of the temple roused in him his better self, and a desire to see all the abuses of the time swept away. Perhaps he undertook for his fellow-Pharisees to find out who this young Galilean reformer was. Per-

haps he only came on his own account. But he came to Jesus by night. Very likely Jesus camped out on the Mount of Olives, close to Jerusalem, as many pilgrims to the Passover did every year. The old Rabbi crossed the valley of the Kedron and found Jesus under the starlit sky, the night wind blowing over the hill-top as it frequently does when all is still below. His respect to this unknown teacher showed how humble and truth-loving he was. He said "Rabbi," as if he were speaking to a well-known teacher of the Law. He declared his conviction, and that of others, that Jesus had come from God, and that God was with him. Here was one whom Jesus could confide in, because he was sincere, and a seeker after truth. He therefore spoke at once to him the truth which was the first letter in his alphabet of salvation. To us the words are very familiar; to Nicodemus they were startling indeed: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born from above he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus had some idea of what was meant by being "born" in this sense; for when a Gentile became a Jew he was said to be "born." He knew well also the term "kingdom of God," and understood by it that reign of God upon earth which devout Jews desired. But he felt that Jesus meant some-

thing deeper; he was old himself, and if there was a new birth, how could he hope to enjoy it? His difficulty led Jesus to speak very plainly. The birth he spoke of was of the Spirit. John the Baptizer had said: "I baptize with water, but he that cometh after me will baptize with the Spirit and with fire." The water stood for repentance, but the Spirit for renewal. And now Jesus told the Rabbi, who had seen and known John's baptism, that he could baptize with the Spirit as well as with water. There is the life of the flesh which begins when we are born, and there is the life of the Spirit which begins when we believe in Jesus, and that life is the new birth, the second birth, the birth from above. "Do not be surprised at what I say," added Jesus; "just as the wind [pneuma] blows as it wills, and you hear it but cannot trace its course, so the Spirit [pneuma] comes to a man, and he is born again by this heavenly power." "How can this take place?" asked Nicodemus.

Then Jesus answered in words which showed that he not only knew that he was Messiah, but also that he had come out of the spiritual world into this with the message and the power which men need in order to be born again and to see the kingdom of God. "We speak that we do know"—he meant that he and God and the

Spirit were speaking through his lips. In describing the birth of the Spirit he was telling Nicodemus what can happen here on earth; a man must believe this before he can know anything of what happens in heaven, that upper world from which Jesus came.

Nicodemus was silent, buried in thought; but Jesus flashed upon him one strong light from the Old Testament, by which he might understand what believing in him meant, and what would result from such belief. In the wilderness Moses lifted up a brazen serpent, and when the Israelites were dying from the poison of the serpents, if they turned their eyes to the brazen serpent they were healed. Now God had sent him, the Son of Man, into the world, stricken with sorrow and sin as it is, to be lifted up, so that every one who believes in him may have life, and live for ever.

We shall see at the end of this book that Nicodemus must have believed in him that night. He was born from above, and was perhaps the first man to understand what Jesus meant.

CHAPTER VII

THROUGH SAMARIA

Now what had become of John the Baptizer? He had left his place of work at Bethany beyond the Jordan, and gone to a place in Samaria called Aenon, between Shechem and the river, where the waters were deep and plentiful. There he continued for a time his work of baptizing. Jesus, after the Passover, left Jerusalem and went down to the scene of his own baptism, where the people still came in numbers to hear the preaching and to be baptized. Here his disciples joined him, and a scene began similar to that which attended John's ministry. Jesus and his little group were regarded as John's followers, and though Jesus himself did not baptize, because it was only baptism of water and the Spirit which he was to give, his disciples quickly baptized more than John had done. This was a great test of John's character. A Jew came to him at Aenon and began to dispute with his followers about the purifying. He told John that Jesus was

succeeding more than he had done, and, indeed, that "all men were coming to him." John could not be provoked into jealousy. He had always said that he was only announcing a greater than himself: he was not the Bridegroom, but the friend of the Bridegroom. If this Jesus, his cousin, was the Bridegroom, as he had declared, he could only rejoice in his success: "He must increase, but I must decrease." Nothing more beautiful is recorded of any prophet or teacher than this.

Presently sad news came from Aenon to Bethany. John had been arrested by Herod Antipas, the petty king of Northern Galilee and the east of the Jordan. Josephus says that the arrest was made because John was stirring up sedition. But we know the shameful truth. Herod was one of the three sons of Herod the Great who killed the children at Bethlehem. He was married to the daughter of the Arabian king Aretas; but he had led away Herodias, the wife of his half-brother Philip, who lived quietly at Jerusalem. John, as a prophet, declared the wickedness of this act; and Herod avenged himself by arresting the brave teacher, on the pretext above named, and sending him away to the lonely castle of Machærus on the east of the Dead Sea.

When Jesus heard what had befallen his

friend and forerunner, he left Bethany and set off to the neighbourhood of Aenon, on the way to Galilee, where he had decided to prosecute his work. Passing through Samaria, he could gather any of John's disciples who were left forlorn by their Master's arrest.

This journey through Samaria is one of the most wonderful things in the life of Jesus. The tract of country between Judæa and Galilee was regarded with hatred by the Jews. Shalmaneser had settled the heathen in it on the fall of Samaria in 721 B.C. (2 Kings xvii.); and when the Jews returned from Babylon they would not let the Samaritans join in the rebuilding of Jerusalem (Ezra iv. 1-3). The Samaritans therefore hated the Jews; some of them had stolen into the temple at Jerusalem and polluted it with bones. Then they built their own temple on Mount Gerizim, south of Shechem. They had their own copy of the Law. They claimed to be descended from Joseph, and called Jacob their father. The Jews and the Samaritans hated each other more than either hated the Gentiles.

Jesus was a Jew, and gloried in it. No one ever regarded that ancient race with more love and veneration. He knew that its purpose in the world was to bring salvation, and to produce a Saviour. As he realized that he was

himself the Saviour whom Judaism existed to produce, he felt the greater devotion to his race and his country. But he was already aware that though he had come to his own race first, his mission was to the whole world. His inner thought is expressed in the words: "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God sent not the Son into the world to judge the world; but that the world should be saved through him."

He therefore felt no hatred to the Samaritans, but was as eager to teach and help them as his own people in Jerusalem or Galilee.

At six o'clock one evening he came to the famous well which Jacob had dug near to Sychar, or El-'Askar as it is now called, under Mount Ebal. The well is still there, a hundred feet deep, surrounded with the ruins of a Crusading chapel, and covered in with a building which belongs to the Greek Church. But at that time the well was open, and Jesus sat down by it while his friends went to the town to buy food. It was evening; most of the women had been to the well for their supply of water. But there was a late-comer, one who, perhaps, preferred not to mingle with the rest, for her character was bad.

Among the Jews a Rabbi would not speak to a woman in public; and this was a woman whom any man might have hesitated to talk to. But Jesus knew no such prejudices. Every human being was dear to him; he was ready to teach or to help whoever came in his way. He knew, however, that this woman would dislike him as a Jew. He therefore began by asking a favour. Would she draw him a little water, to quench his thirst? The woman was not bad enough to refuse, but she could not help sneering: "You a Jew, and ask water from me, a Samaritan! I thought your people would have nothing to do with mine."

A great pity and love rose in the heart of Jesus for this bad woman who was living in sin, and showed it on her countenance. He startled her curiosity by saying: "If you knew who I am you would ask me, and I should give you water from a spring, not from a well like this."

She was puzzled, for he had no means of drawing water from the well. Besides, he had asked her for water to drink. Something in his face and manner made her feel that he was talking of water in another sense. Her spirit awoke. Was he a great prophet, greater than Jacob, the reputed founder of her race, who had dug and used the well?

Then he said: "This water leaves you thirsty; the water I give satisfies you, springs up as a well within unto eternal life." She would like such water of life—though her mind still dwelt on the water in the well, and she thought how convenient it would be not to have to come to the well and draw.

Suddenly Jesus said: "Go and fetch your husband." That was a home thrust; for she was living with a man that was not her husband. Jesus read what was in her mind and in her past history, and showed that he did. "You are a prophet," she exclaimed. By her conscience her religious sense had been reached, and she began to murmur something about the rival sanctuaries at Jerusalem and Shechem.

This was a fallen Samaritan woman; but she was capable of great things. She had a soul that could rise to heights of faith and love. Jesus therefore uttered to her the greatest truth that could be spoken. The time was coming, he was bringing it, when sanctuaries would not matter, but worship would have to be spiritual: "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth."

The wonder of this statement brought to her mind the Messiah whom the Jews were expecting. When he came, she said, he would tell

them all things. Jesus said: "I that speak unto you am he."

At that moment the disciples came back, and, to their surprise, found Jesus talking with a woman. She left her water-pot and hurried back to Sychar. She was deeply convinced and converted. "Come," she said to every one, "and see a man who told me all things that ever I did, the Messiah." A crowd poured out of the city towards the well.

Jesus had no mind now to eat. He was brought into his full work by this talk with the woman. This was his real food. They were yet four months from the harvest home of the fields; but see those people streaming out across the green corn to be taught and saved; surely the harvest is white; sower and reaper can rejoice together.

This welcome of believing people from a Samaritan town surprised Jesus. He stayed with them for two days, and many believed on him. The woman's words were true: he was all, and more than all, that she had said. These people outside the pale of Judaism were the first to see, what all men are gradually learning, that he was not only the Messiah of the Jews, but "indeed the Saviour of the world."

Nothing but the strongest sense of his duty

tore him away from this most promising field to pass on to Galilee: but unto the house of Israel was he sent. His feeling is shown by the little word "for" at the beginning of verse 44, John iv.

CHAPTER VIII

CAPERNAUM

Now what does that little word "for" mean in John iv. 44? He went into Galilee, his own country, "*for* Jesus himself testified that a prophet hath no honour in his own country." That means that he went into Galilee knowing that he would not be honoured there as he was at Shechem. Our great orator and statesman, Edmund Burke, closed one of his speeches in the House of Commons by the remark: "I know the map of England as well as the noble lord, or as any other person, and I know that the way I take is not the road to preferment." Noble men are not thinking of their own honour; they go, not the way of glory, but the way of duty. Jesus went back to Galilee, where people had known him as a boy and as a carpenter; and he was pleased that the home people gave him a kind welcome on account of the things that he had done at Jerusalem. His intention was to settle at Capernaum, for reasons which shall be presently

stated. But he went by way of his early home and visited Cana, the scene of the wedding feast. Strange to say, while he was there the call to Capernaum came in an unexpected way and from an unexpected person. There was an officer of King Herod's at Capernaum—it may have been Chuza, who is mentioned by Luke (viii. 3)—who was in trouble because his son was ill. He made the journey across the hills to find Jesus, convinced that if he would come down to Capernaum he could heal his boy. Jesus, full of the recent spiritual harvest in Samaria, waiting for the spiritual hunger and thirst to awake among his own people, was disappointed that this great man had come, not for spiritual healing, but for physical. He felt the pain of the soul that finds God everything, and comes to realize that most people seem to want everything more than God. He could not keep back the exclamation: "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will in no wise believe." But the father's heart was eager, and urged him to come at once before the boy was dead. And Jesus felt his anguish, and though he would have given anything to hear the cry for God and for spiritual blessing, he would not refuse this loving appeal for the lesser gift.

It was not necessary for him to go down to Capernaum. Mind can touch mind at a greater

distance than that of twenty miles; and Jesus was so close to God that he could ask for the cure of this disease, and know that his Father would grant it to him. He therefore said at once to the man: "Go home; your son is getting better." We can imagine what a look of power and of pity there was in the face of Jesus; for the great man did not doubt for a moment; he set off on the journey home. When he reached the point where the steep road ran down to Capernaum on the following day, some of his slaves met him with good news. The fever had been subdued on the previous evening at seven o'clock. That was just the time when Jesus said the words: "Go home; your son is getting better."

This kind and loving help gave Jesus one friend at least in Capernaum; the wife and family of the grateful officer believed too; and Jesus recognized that the busy town and neighbourhood of the lake were calling him from the quiet retreats of Nazareth and Cana into the tides of human life.

Now we must see why Jesus made Capernaum his centre of work. If you look at a raised map of the Holy Land, you will see the river Jordan rushing down from the slopes of Hermon in a deep valley; it enters the Lake of Gennesareth, and then plunges out of it down

the Ghôr, as it was called, until it loses itself in the Dead Sea. That lake is the most lovely part of the river course; and was, at the time we are speaking of, surrounded by populous towns. The Rabbis quoted a saying of God: "Seven seas have I created, but of them all have I chosen none save the sea of Chinnereth"—this was another name for the lake (Num. xxxiv. 11; Josh. xiii. 27). The saying shows that this district was the jewel of the land. The lake, thirteen miles long and eight broad, is about the size of Windermere. But instead of having mountains only at one end, like our beautiful lake, it is surrounded by them. It lies six hundred and eighty-two feet below the Mediterranean, and two thousand feet below many of the girdling heights. Its colour under the clear sky is intensely blue, and the mountains assume all the colours of the rainbow through the changes of the atmosphere. The snow-peak of Hermon looks down upon it from the north, and on the western shore rises the mountain called now Kurûn Hattin, which plays a part in the ministry of Jesus.

At that time the towns were thick along the northern and western shores; on the eastern shore the cliffs descend too abruptly into the sea for towns to be built on the margin; Gerasa and Gadara stood back on the hill-tops. But

where the Jordan enters the lake was Bethsaida, which means "House of Fish," the town, perhaps, of the first group of disciples. Moving along the western shore you would come to Chorazin, Capernaum, Dalmanutha, Magdala, Tiberias, Taricheæ, in rapid succession. All of these have disappeared to-day except Tiberias—one which Jesus did not visit. Taricheæ, at the southern end, means "The Pickleries": it was the centre of an immense and world-wide trade in dried and salted fish. This was the industry which made the lake populous and busy. The people were fishermen or fishcurers. The district was to the Holy Land what Yarmouth and Lowestoft are to England.

We wish we knew exactly where Capernaum stood on that eastern shore. There are two sites on which ruins are found: Tel Hûm, which might be a contraction of "the ruins of Capernaum," where are the ruins of a fine synagogue built in the Roman-Greek style, and Khan Minyeh, two or three miles further south. If only we could be sure that Tel Hûm was the site, that ruined synagogue might have been the one which the centurion built for the Jews, and as we walk the pavement and climb the steps we might know that the feet of Jesus had been there before us. But wherever Capernaum stood, the name meant "Village

of Consolation," and the quarter of the town near the shore was called Bethsaida ("House of Fish"). The town of Bethsaida was distinguished as Bethsaida Julias; but this quarter of Capernaum was simply known as "Fish-house" (Mark vi. 45 = John vi. 17).

Wherever Capernaum stood, it was evidently the most important and prosperous of the busy towns along the lake. The fishing enriched the people; but the country surrounding it was remarkably fertile also. It was close to the frontier where the great road from Damascus to the sea entered Galilee. Hence it was known as "the way of the sea." It was a point for the collection of customs, both from the lake industry and from the land traffic. There were stationed not only the great officers of Herod's court, but Roman legions, with their centurions, interested in the life of the people (Matt. viii. 5, 9; Luke vii. 3, 5).

Thus in Capernaum Jesus was touching not only all the life of his own country, but the life of the countries beyond. It was Galilee of the Gentiles; it was a centre from which roads radiated in all directions. Here the religious leaders from Jerusalem frequently appeared, and other people from the south. Here he was in touch with Peræa on the east, and with Phœnicia on the north (Mark iii. 7, 8).

Jesus knew that his personal mission was to his own people, the Jews. He could only touch sparsely the regions beyond. But he could not resist being as near to those outside regions as possible, and again and again we find him making incursions into them.

Jerusalem was the closed and almost unapproachable centre of Jewish pride and prejudice, but Capernaum was the open way of the world. In Jerusalem Jesus could not have developed a mission at all. His visits to that home of fanaticism were dangerous to himself: if he had settled there the end would have come immediately. At Capernaum, under the laxer and secular rule of Herod Antipas, he would have opportunity to expound his doctrine, gather his disciples, and prepare them for the task which he would leave to them.

Perhaps there was one other reason which led him to Capernaum. His mission was to the sick; and the lovely district of the lake was a health resort for the whole country. At Emmaus, near to Tiberias, there were medicinal springs, which drew crowds of sufferers in June and July, and we are told that it was the neighbourhood of the springs which led Herod Antipas to fix his capital there, the capital which he called Tiberias, after the emperor Tiberius. The sick people who surrounded Jesus in his ministry

were not the ordinary sufferers of the locality; they were the invalids drawn from all quarters to the springs of Emmaus. It is surprising that Jesus did not go to Tiberias. But a royal town is not a favourable place for a religious work, and Capernaum was a few miles nearer to the great roads of transit and to the open world.

Jesus came, then, to settle in Capernaum. The cure of the officer's son would be known in the town. His young followers, Andrew and John, Peter and Philip, were within touch. Whether in the synagogue of the Jews or in the open air, he began to teach the people. What was his message in these early days? He took up the very words which his friend John the Baptizer had used: "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. iii. 2). But he had at once a wonderful addition to the message, which seemed to make it another thing: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe in the gospel" (Mark i. 15).

Yes, the time had come, the time for which Israel had been waiting, for which all the world had been waiting. The kingdom of God had actually drawn nigh. Yes, he made people feel that this kingdom, of which the Rabbis spoke as something far away or in the future, was there in their midst, there where he was (Luke

xviii. 20, 21). The reign of God upon earth in a new and wonderful way had begun. People need not wait any longer : they could acknowledge their King and begin at once to live under his rule.


Thus there was, what John had never had, a "Gospel." That beautiful Anglo-Saxon word, which from the first was used to translate the Greek word "evangel," means "God-story." Jesus had a God-story to tell, the most wonderful story that can ever be told. He had told it to Nicodemus at Jerusalem and to the Samaritan woman by the well, a story about God, the great and good Spirit, who is seeking men to be born of the Spirit and to worship Him in the Spirit. But there were not many as yet who could understand that God-story as Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman did. Much had to be done to make even the most ready disciples understand it. But from the first he joined to the call, Repent, not only the preaching of the kingdom of God, but the announcement of the Gospel. There was a God-story which every one might at least desire to hear and to understand.

CHAPTER IX

HE CHOOSES HIS MEN

JESUS now wanted to choose some men whom he could teach and train to preach the good news. He was very particular in the choice, because very much depended on it. Five young men had been drawn to him by the Jordan and at Jerusalem: Simon, Andrew, John, Philip, and Nathanael of Cana. But when he came to live in Capernaum he let them go back to their business, for the time had not yet come to form a company of disciples.

The time, however, soon came. As he began to teach, crowds gathered round him and he needed the help of suitable companions. One day on the shore of the lake the eager crowd pressed upon him, and he got into one of two boats on the beach. Now it happened that the two boats belonged to a little company of fishermen, two of whom, Simon and John, had been among the first followers by the Jordan. At that moment the fishermen were not in the boats, but were occupied in washing the nets.





"LET DOWN YOUR NET AND FISH"

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Jesus wanted the boat as a pulpit, that he might teach the people on the beach without being pressed. Did he know that the boat was Simon's? Did he mean to teach and to call Simon in this way? At any rate he asked Simon to get into his own boat and push out a little from the shore. This Simon gladly did. When the teaching was over, Jesus said: "Now push out into the deep water, and let down your net and fish." Simon said: "Captain" (in Luke viii. 24 the sailors' word is used again in the boat), "we fish by night, when the glare is not on the lake. We were fishing all last night, and caught nothing. But I will do what you tell me."

Wonderful to say, when the net was let down it was immediately filled with fish. The men hauled at the ropes, and the net began to break with the weight of the great catch. The other boat which belonged to John and his elder brother James was within hail. It came to their assistance, and when the net was drawn in, both the boats were filled with the fish to the point of sinking. Simon felt that this amazing draught of fishes was due to Jesus. It was the power of God in Jesus that worked the wonder. And it made Simon feel how sinful and unworthy he was. As Jesus sat in the stern of the boat, Simon threw himself at his feet, and

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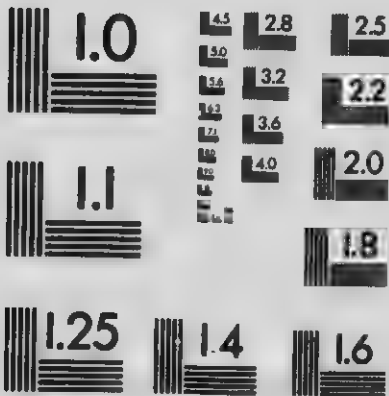


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no longer using the half-playful word "Captain," he said, "Lord" (the title of utmost honour), "depart from me, for I am a sinful man." That was the feeling which the presence of Jesus excited. He felt too sinful to bear that pure, strong presence. Jesus calmed his fear, and said to him: "You shall give up this fishing now, and come to fish for men with me." In this way his first disciple was called. But with him came his brother Andrew, and the two brothers, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who owned the other boat. These four were now dedicated spirits. They understood that they were to follow Jesus and learn how to catch men alive for the kingdom of God.

We do not know particularly how the others were called, with the exception of the tax-gatherer Levi, of whom we shall hear later. But we can see that Jesus was very careful, and would not let people offer themselves as disciples without thinking it over and seeing what it meant. The Twelve, who, as we shall see, were at last made Apostles, *i.e.* his chosen and special messengers, were gathered together gradually from among those who were attracted by his teaching. Some who wished to be chosen were not. One day a learned man, a teacher of the Law, called a Rabbi, was so impressed with the authority of Jesus that

he came up and said: "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go." But Jesus knew that the offer was only impulsive. He quietly replied that while the foxes have their holes, and the birds their nests, he had no place to lie down in. And the Rabbi, seeing that to follow Jesus might mean poverty and discomfort, said no more.

Of course Jesus required men who would give him their hearts and put his work before everything else. If they were thinking of themselves, or even of their friends and their homes, they could not do the work which he had for them to do. Once he called on a very hesitating man to follow him. Clement of Alexandria says that this man was Philip; but that is only tradition. The reply was: "Let me first go and bury my father," by which he meant, "let me wait until my father dies, and then I will come and be your disciple." Jesus answered with a word which could never be forgotten: "Let the dead bury their dead; follow me." Men of the world could attend to men of the world, but those who were called to the higher work, the work of the kingdom of God, must put that work before everything else. If the man was really Philip, we know that he understood and obeyed.

There was another instance which shows what

Jesus required in those who were to be his disciples and fellow-workers. A man offered to follow him, but only asked to go home first and say good-bye to his relatives, and settle his affairs. It seemed a small and natural thing to ask. Yes, he might certainly go and do this if he wished. But the wish showed that he had not the right spirit. He was only half-hearted. When a man is ploughing, if his attention is turned to something behind, and he looks back, he will never make the furrow straight. And indeed if he keeps on looking back he will never make the furrow at all.

You can see, then, what Jesus wanted, in choosing his followers, his fishers of men; he wanted those who put him first, who were ready to give up everything for him, those who felt that his work in the world was the most important thing that could be done, and every other work must be laid aside for it.


Such men he found in some of his first followers; and such he has found ever since; they are the only kind that are of much use to him. Half-hearted people are of no good. And such men are seldom rich and learned and powerful men, because their hearts are full of other things. He usually has to take his followers and servants from the poor and the simple, who are ready to give all for all.

And yet, would not you like to be his disciple? Would it not be better than to be the richest man in England, better than to be the most learned man in Europe, better than to be the most successful man in America, to be chosen as a disciple of Jesus, who went about doing good, and has left behind him the greatest name in all the world?

CHAPTER X

THE SYNAGOGUE

IN every town there was a synagogue. In large towns there were many. The synagogue was what we now call a church or a chapel. It was a place for worship. Sometimes it was a small plain building like a village chapel; sometimes it was a fine and beautiful building like a great city church. At Tel Hûm, for instance, which many people think is the site of Capernaum, on the Lake of Gennesareth, the ruins of a very noble synagogue have been dug out. The carved columns and the carefully-laid pavement show that it was built in the style of the Greeks and Romans. And we remember how a Roman centurion built the Galileans a synagogue on that spot. Every synagogue was managed by ten officers; three of these were magistrates as well as clergy, and were known as the Rulers of the Synagogue. Another of the ten was the director of the services; he was called the angel (which means messenger) of the church, and the overseer (or bishop) of the



congregation. Three more were deacons, whose duty it was to care for the poor. These seven were called "The seven good men of the town." An eighth was the interpreter, because the Hebrew Bible was read, and it needed interpreting into the Aramaic language which the people spoke. The other two officers had no special office. Twice on the sabbath a service was held, and twice in the week, on what we should call Monday and Thursday. The sabbath, you know, was Saturday. Any one might be asked by the director, or minister, to speak to the people. Prayers were offered; passages were read from the Law, or the Prophets, or the Psalms, and sermons were preached.

Jesus always went to the service in the synagogue. And very soon after he went to live in Capernaum he had a great opportunity. One sabbath the minister asked him to preach. He preached a sermon which produced a wonderful effect. He spoke as one having authority, and not as the Scribes. The Scribes, or professional teachers of the Law, tried to explain the Law of Moses, and showed what all the Rabbis had said about it since his time. As the Rabbis had said different things, the hearers were often left in doubt about the meaning. But Jesus, while he said at once that he had come to teach the Law, showed that he was above the Law;

he could alter it, could give it a deeper meaning, could make it blossom into fairer flower, and bear better fruit.

We should like to know exactly what the sermon was which he preached on that first sabbath in the synagogue of Capernaum. However dull sermons nowadays may seem to you, I think you would listen to that sermon, which filled every one with astonishment. We can, however, recover some of it from the great discourse which Matthew tells us was delivered on the mountain. Perhaps if you were to read Matt. v. 17-30 (or Luke xii. 58, 59), 33-37; vi. 1-8, 16-18; vii. 28, 29, you would know what Jesus said in that opening sermon, and would see why it seemed so wonderful to them all. He loved the Temple at Jerusalem, as we saw; he loved the Old Testament scriptures; he respected the teachers of the Law, who "sat in Moses' seat." But burning in his heart was a truth which made temple and bible and teaching a new thing. It was the truth that the heart itself must be good and true and pure; that the heart itself must be a temple, a bible, and the seat of the teacher. He saw that the goodness of the religious people of his time, even the religion of the best of them, the Pharisees, was outward, and not inward. It looked better than it was, while he came to tell men

that their goodness must be better even than it looks.

This was the gist of his sermon, the beginning of his ministry :

"Of old, men were told that they may not kill, but I tell you that anger in your heart is wrong." There were three courts known then : that of the Rulers of the Synagogue, that of the Council, or Sanhedrin, of Jerusalem ; and that of the Roman Government. The first could inflict slight punishments, the second severer, and the third the severest of all, death. "I tell you that for anger you should be brought before the first court ; for speaking in scorn to another, before the second ; for saying ' fool,' before the third."

"Get rid of all anger," he said ; "agree with your fellows before the judgment comes. If you do not, you will come to the punishment from which there is no escape, till all is paid." This was strong teaching to people whose hearts were hot and angry.

He went on : "Of old they forbade you to do what is impure, but I tell you not to think what is impure. Indeed, so terrible is it to have an impure heart, that it would be better to lose your right hand, or your right eye, or whatever is dearest to you, than to let in these bad thoughts." That also was very

strong for people who thought that it did not matter what you *think*, so long as you do not do what is wrong.

He went on: "Men were formerly told that they must keep their word; if they made an oath they must not break it. But I say to you, do not make oaths at all. Say only yes, and no, and keep it. Let every one know that your word is enough."

That was hard for men who were always swearing "By heaven!" or "By earth!" or "By Jerusalem!" or "By my own head!"

And now hardest of all: "The Law said that if any one knocked out your tooth or your eye, you should pay him out by doing to him what he did to you. I say unto you that you shall not. When any one injures you, you shall not injure him in return." Yes, that was hardest of all, because passion makes us hit back, and up to this time every one thought it was quite right.

Then he went on: "You religious people must not do your religious deeds, like actors on the stage [hypocrites] for men to see you. If you give money to the poor you must not call attention to it." That was hard on men who gave in order to be admired by others. One quaint old writer, Thomas Fuller, says: "I have observed some at the church door cast

in sixpence with such ostentation, that it rebounded from the bottom and rang against both sides of the bason (so that the same piece of silver was at the same time the alms and the giver's trumpet), whilst others have dropped down silent five shillings without any noise."

And Jesus went on: "When you pray you are not to stand in a public place, and call attention to your prayer; but you are to go into your room and shut the door and speak to your Heavenly Father. And you are not to say a prayer over and over again as heathen do, as if you could buy things from God for so many prayers. But you are to pray very simply." And he taught them the prayer which we all know and use—

"Our Father which art in heaven,
Hallowed be Thy name,
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done as in heaven so on earth;
Give us this day our daily bread,
And forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our
debtors,
And bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the
evil one."

This prayer, if we mean it, should be said once in the day; that is enough. If we do not mean it, it will be none the better for saying it over and over again, in that clatter and babble which heathen forms of worship delight in.

Prayer is in the heart, and comes from the true heart; if you forgive those who injure you, you can ask God to forgive you. But if you do not, the prayer is not really prayer.

Then he went on: "You fast twice in the week; on Monday and Thursday; and as these are the synagogue days, you come to the service pale and faint with the fasting, and every one says how pious you are. But if you fast, you must take care that no one knows it but God. Directly it begins to attract the attention of men it ceases to be of any good."

It was very simple teaching, but every one was astonished, because Jesus spoke as if he was the giver of the Law. With all respect for Moses and for the Scribes, he showed that his own inner knowledge was greater than theirs. He spoke, if we may say so, from a greater height, and also from a deeper depth.

When the sermon was over, suddenly a man in the congregation shrieked out in a way which made every one turn and look at him: "What have we to do with you, Jesus of Nazareth? You have come to destroy *us*. I know you: you are the Holy One of God." The man was suffering from mental disease, a kind of disease which is still very common in China and other heathen countries. He fancied that he was possessed by evil spirits; he spoke words not

for himself only, but for them. When he said, "you have come to destroy *us*," it meant the spirits which he supposed were in him. When he said, "you are the Holy One of God," he was speaking with the strange, uncanny knowledge which people suffering from such a disease often show. We call these complaints now insanity. But our doctors do not understand them, and are not able to cure them.

Jesus dealt with this man in the simplest way. He spoke to the diseased spirit which the man thought was in him. "Be muzzled and come out of him," he said. The poor suffered cried out, and it was as if he were torn asunder. Then he was still and silent and in his right mind.

You can easily imagine what an effect this had on the people. The teaching was new and strong, but the voice that taught could heal a diseased mind as well. Nothing could have proved the truth of the teaching better to people there and then than this word of power and its immediate effect. A new teaching indeed! Not only had it an authority, such as the Scribes had not, but it reached all the sufferings of human beings, as the old Law did not pretend to do.

This remarkable sermon in the synagogue of Capernaum, with the cure of the poor suffering epileptic, was carried by every one along the

busy roads of Galilee. Every one was talking about it, and before long it was known north and south and east and west that Jesus of Nazareth was one who had a wonderful power in word and deed.

His ministry in Galilee was thus fairly begun.



CHAPTER XI

HIS FIRST YEAR'S WORK

AFTER the service in the synagogue that day, the Master went to the house of the fishermen Simon and Andrew. They welcomed him there and bade him stay with them whenever he was in Capernaum. But when they got in they found every one in trouble. Simon, though a young man, was already married, and his mother-in-law lived with him. She had been taken ill; her temperature had gone up; and the fever, in those days of primitive medical science, was only too likely to take her life. Often, in the hot climate of the Lake of Gennesareth, people were carried off in a day or two by this disease. But the Master had just come from healing the sick man in the synagogue, and immediately he entered the house they told him of the sufferer. Jesus felt within him the healing power, and went straight to the bed. He took the burning hand in his own, and made her sit up. At his touch the pulse grew still and the hand grew cool. She rose from the

bed and said she felt perfectly well. And she showed that she was so by taking up her household duties at once. She began to prepare the food for the party that had returned from the synagogue, and there was no more sign of the fever. The day was nearly over, and the sun was going down over Kurûn Hattin, the high mountain behind Capernaum. At sunset the sabbath was over, and the people were at liberty, even according to the strictest view of the Law, to bring their sick to the Healer.

Every one in Capernaum by this time knew what had happened; and so confident were they that Jesus could heal every kind of disease that they brought the poor sufferers on their pallets; they brought also those whose minds were unsound; and the crowd gathered and closed in about the house. Many of the sick he healed; and the insane he treated as he had treated the man in the synagogue, only he would not let them speak; for though they knew who he was, "the Holy One of God," he did not wish to have the witness of these unsound minds. He wanted people in their natural state to recognize and know him.

This had been a wonderful day in Capernaum, but Jesus resolved to leave the town at once for a time. It was not his purpose to be a doctor and to spend his time in healing the

sick; and when all the city was excited on this subject it would not be possible to do anything else. Very early in the morning, even before the sun had risen, he left the house and found a quiet place in the hills to pray. In prayer lay his power, because in that way he kept the path open between him and his Father. His work was important, and so was his teaching, but he needed prayer, long, quiet prayer, in order to do either.

But before he had been long in prayer, his host, Simon, found him out. Even at that early hour people had come to seek him, to hear him, to be touched by him. Simon, as an eager disciple, wanted him to come at once to them, and heal and teach as on the previous evening. But Jesus told him his plan: "No, we will start to-day on a journey through all the neighbouring towns and villages." The shore of the lake was studded with large towns. Over the hills to Nazareth there were frequent villages. All along the plain to Mount Carmel there were busy towns. He had much to do. He was sure that he was sent to all these places with the message that he had given in Capernaum. And if he started at once he would avoid the excitement which had been roused in the town. But before he could start the crowd got at him and tried to stop him (Luke iv. 42). They

wanted to be taught and to be healed. He could not listen to them; the other places were waiting for the good news, and he must go.

We wish we could follow him every step of the way, and mention all the places he visited and all the good he did. But of that wide journey only one story has reached us. He was preaching and healing in every synagogue. What he taught we can learn from the report of a sermon preached on a mountain, probably Kurûn Hattin, given in Matt. v.-vii. But how he healed is shown only by one instance, the healing of a leper (viii. 1-4). No disease is more terrible than leprosy—it is as bad in the body as sin is in the soul. It eats the body away and makes it terribly ugly. The leper was unclean, and might not come into contact with other people. I never saw anything more sad than the poor lepers begging at the entrance to the Garden of Gethsemane, or going at night-time to the dismal house in the Kedron valley where they are obliged to live all herded together.

People were afraid to touch a leper, because it made them, in the eyes of the priests, unclean. It was part of the priest's duty, as you can read in the Old Testament (Num. xii. 12 and Lev. xiii. 45), to make a leper who got well clean.

In one place, during the tour, a leper found

Jesus in a house. The poor man was sure that Jesus could cure him. He called to him, fell on his knees, and *worshipped* him (Matt. viii. 2). He seemed to understand that the great Teacher and Healer must be treated as God. "Lord," he said, "if you will, you can make me clean." Now Jesus did not want to offend the priests by interfering with their work; nor was his main object to heal disease; but he did want to heal sin, and he knew how healing leprosy would make people think of healing sin. And besides, when he looked at this poor sufferer his heart filled with pity (Mark i. 41). He reached out his hand and touched him; yes, he did not shrink from the unclean act which would fill every one with horror, because there was healing in his touch. "I will, indeed," he said, "be cleansed!" As Jesus spoke the terrible white spots disappeared; health came to the leper, and he was well. But Jesus did not wish it to be talked about, lest the crowd of curious sightseers should hinder the work; and he wished the priests to do their duty. He turned to the grateful man, and, knitting his brows, he told the man to leave the house at once, and to go to the priest with the offering appointed by the Law (Lev. xiii. 49; xiv. 2-32). The man, in his gratitude, was disobedient, and told every one what Jesus had done for

him. But the disobedience was wrong. People grew again so excited, and crowded around the wonderful Healer in such a way that he could not appear in the towns at all. He went into the lonely places of the country, and even there people gathered to him from all sides.

Perhaps this was the reason why he determined to go back to Capernaum, where the excitement roused by the healing of the insane man some weeks before had perhaps died down.

But one who had come into the world to heal and to save could not be let alone. As soon as he entered the town, the elders of the synagogue met him with a request. There was a centurion, or, as we should say, a captain, of the army, living in Capernaum who, though a Roman, was so friendly to the Jews that he had at his own expense built them a synagogue. The elders, in gratitude to him, now came to Jesus, as a healer, asking him to come and heal a favourite slave of the centurion who was very ill. This, too, was a terrible illness: the sufferer shook in every limb, and could not do anything with his hands. The elders said: "Come quickly; the man well deserves your care." Jesus went at once towards the centurion's house; but the centurion came out and with great reverence said: "Do not trouble yourself to come to the house; I am not worthy

to have such a guest; only speak the word, and my servant will be well. I know, as a soldier, how I obey my commanding officer, and how my soldiers and servants obey me. If you give your orders the illness will go." Jesus was delighted with the man's faith. He turned to those about him and said: "I have not met with so great faith in Israel, where I expected it. I see how people will come from all nations to sit down with the favoured people in the kingdom of God, while many of the favoured people who do not believe will be drawn out of the banqueting chamber into the cold, dark street." Then he said to the centurion: "Go home; you will find it as you wish." When he got home, the slave was already getting better. Jesus had healed the nobleman's son (John iv. 46-54); now he had healed a centurion's slave. Perhaps it was this kindness shown to foreigners which made the Jews jealous. But certain it is that the officials of Judaism began now to look at Jesus with unfriendly eyes. Some of the members of the Sanhedrin came up from Jerusalem to watch him. And wherever he went or whatever he did, he now saw some of these frowning faces watching him, and ready to find fault with him.

Before long an occasion came for them to express their feelings in an event which hap-

pened in the synagogue; and then they kept finding new reasons for disapproval every day. But this hatred of the religious Jews, who, you would have thought, would have welcomed and loved Jesus, is so strange that we must leave it for another chapter.

CHAPTER XII

WHY THE PRIESTS AND THE PHARISEES AND THE SANHEDRIN WERE OPPOSED TO JESUS

THIS was the first occasion of offence. At one of the weekday services there was a crowd in the synagogue, such a crowd that no one could get in at the door. Jesus was preaching to them; and a paralysed man was brought for him to speak the word of healing. The man could not walk, but was carried on his mat by his friends. He was a young man, and the paralysis had been brought on by his evil life. But now he was sure that Jesus could heal him, and so eager was he to be healed that he could not wait until the meeting was over. He bade them carry him to the roof of the building, and prise up the stones which formed the roof just above the pulpit where Jesus was standing. It was a dangerous and thoughtless thing to do. But presently, to every one's amazement, the paralysed youth was let down from the roof just in front of Jesus. The Healer saw at once what it all meant; he saw the faith of those who

had brought the invalid; he saw the cause of that early paralysis. And with great kindness he said at once: "Child, take courage; your sins are forgiven." Jesus knew that the only way to cure people of sin is that God should forgive them, and then they in love and gratitude will sin no more. He knew also that it would be useless to heal the paralysis unless the sin which caused it was removed. He spoke quite naturally, because he knew that he had power to forgive sins as no one else had.

But that row of priests and Pharisees who were listening to him were angry, so that though they only spoke in a whisper, and declared that Jesus was a blasphemer for saying what only God can say, Jesus saw what they were thinking. At once he said to them: "Is it easier to heal this paralytic, or to forgive his sins?" Now it was the Jewish view that all illness is the result of sin, and no healing can come unless the sins are forgiven. If, therefore, this man should be healed, they would be obliged to admit that his sins were forgiven. Without waiting for an answer to his question, Jesus turned to the helpless invalid and said: "Get up, take your mat, and walk home!" To the wonder of all, the paralysed man rose and walked out. All the people in the synagogue, full of awe and gladness, praised God for this

power exercised through one who was a man like themselves. "We never saw anything like this," they said. But the Pharisees thought it was blasphemy, and the priests feared that if this kind of thing went on their occupation would be gone.

They soon found fresh reasons for objecting to Jesus in his being a friend of sinners, and in his breaking the sabbath, as they called it.

One day, walking by the sea, Jesus actually called a "publican" to be his disciple. A publican was a tax-gatherer. But as the taxes were collected by the Roman Government, and not by the people for the people, every one hated the collectors. The native Israelites who entered the service of the Government for this purpose were specially hated, as traitors to their country who, to make money, would rob their own people. As these men were called robbers, they became so. The Rabbis shut them out from the religious life, and spoke of assassins, robbers and publicans as if they were all one. Publicans and sinners went together in common speech. Now Jesus horrified every one by speaking to one of these tax-gatherers, who was seated at his desk on the wharf to collect the tolls on the fishing boats. The man's name was Levi, the son of Alphæus; he must have been a real Jew. And here he was in the service

of the foreigner and the conqueror. He was afterwards known as Matthew, and a good part of the first Gospel was written down by him. He was a well-to-do man; for the publicans got rich by their tricks and cruelties. He was busy at his work. And yet, when Jesus said to him: "Follow me," he rose from his stool, left his desk and all his business, and followed. Jesus had won him; he had heard the preaching on the shore. He looked at the preacher, and felt he could do anything for him. When, therefore, the Master came to him and called him, he obeyed without a word.

So glad was he that he went to his house and ordered a great dinner for the Master and his followers. A number of his fellow-officers in the revenue, and of the loose and lawless characters with whom the tax-gatherers mixed, because the respectable people would have nothing to do with them, came to the dinner. In Matthew's house, which would be open to the street, there was a large and mixed company. It was a strange place for a religious teacher, certainly. But Jesus had his reasons for being there, as we shall see. The Pharisees, who were now lynx-eyed to find fault with him, followed at least to the door of the house; and some other critics came, disciples of John the Baptist, lean and pale with fasting. Looking at the

diners, the Pharisees said to Peter and John and the other followers of Jesus: "Why does your teacher dine with the publicans and the sinners?" These young followers would have been puzzled enough to answer, but happily for them Jesus heard the question, and his answer was shot out with the speed of a bolt: "The sick need the doctor, not people who feel well." Yes, he was the doctor for these people whose souls were sick and ill. He had come on purpose to find them and to heal them. And then he quoted a text of Scripture which was his favourite verse. You find it in Hos. vi. 6. He said to the Pharisees: "Go and find out the meaning of these words: 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.'" The words meant, as you can see, that what God wants from us is not words and rites and ceremonies, but mercy to the sick and suffering and sinful. Jesus feels to men just as God does. There was his answer.

But the disciples of John had their difficulty too. They and the Pharisees thought that religion meant fasting. They were puzzled to see a religious teacher, the one whom their master had hailed and baptized, sitting at a good dinner. Jesus gave them a very gentle reply. He reminded them that John had compared him to the bridegroom and himself to the bridegroom's friend; and John had said plainly

that Jesus would grow ever greater and take his place (John iii. 29). Yes, said Jesus, he was the bridegroom, and in the glad bridal days of the new truth, the good news, there was no room for fasting. He wished men to be glad: he had come to make them glad. The time would come when the bridegroom would be gone, and then his friends would fast. But for the present you could not combine the old sad order with the new glad order, any more than you can sew a piece of new strong cloth on an old and rotten dress, or any more than you can put the new fermenting wine into old leathern bottles, which would immediately burst. The new religion of the kingdom of God must find new forms of strength and joy in place of the old fastings and self-tormentings. "Though," he said very kindly, "I know you will not see this all at once. A new truth is like new wine, and people like the old and the familiar." One of the wise had said, one who had the same name as Jesus: "As new wine, so is a new friend. If it become old thou shalt drink it with gladness" (Ecclus. ix. 10). Jesus saw that it would take time before men could see how much better his wonderful new truth was than the old.

But you can see how angry these lovers of the old order were with him for receiving sinners, and for making them welcome

into the kingdom of God with joy instead of fasting.

The other thing which made them even more furious was the way in which he treated the sabbath. To keep the day of rest was the greatest thing in the Jewish religion. And Jesus loved it as much as the priests or the Pharisees did. But the Scribes and lawyers had turned the beautiful custom into a perfect nuisance. Instead of letting every one rest on the seventh day and be glad, they had made out the most terrible list of things that people might not do on that day, until the fear of doing something wrong had taken away all the blessing of the rest day. It seems almost droll to us to hear what they said was wrong, and also by what tricks they tried to get out of the rules which they had themselves made. They actually spoke of all nature resting on the seventh day. A properly behaved river would flow only on six days and stop on the seventh. There were thirty-nine works which might not be done on the sabbath. That was pretty severe; but the casuists of the Law, that is, the men who discussed all the cases that might occur, worked out each of the thirty-nine works in such a way that there was hardly anything you might do. For instance, reaping was one of the forbidden works, and thrashing the ears

was another. But to pluck a stalk of wheat, they said, was to reap, and to rub the ear in your hands was to thrash.

One sabbath day, towards the end of his first year, in the month of April, Jesus and his friends were going through a cornfield. The Law permitted wayfarers to pluck the crops in passing through. But when the disciples did this on that sabbath, the Pharisees came up and said: "They are breaking the Law by reaping and thrashing on the sabbath." The answer of Jesus went to the root of the matter. All religious arrangements are for the good of men. And while rules may be good, there are always occasions on which it is better to break them. For instance, in 1 Sam. xxi. 1-6, David and his followers were right to eat the shewbread, though as a rule it was only for the priests. Or again, in the temple the priests worked hard on the sabbath, in killing the animals and offering them for sacrifices; indeed it was commonly said that "the temple had no sabbath." Then Jesus made the great statement: "One greater than the temple is here." If the service of the temple excused breaking the rule of the sabbath, the service of Jesus, which was the service of humanity, would still more excuse it. Yes, he was Lord of the sabbath. He could keep the sabbath for the good

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of men, and yet excuse men from the tiresome regulations which Judaism had made. Again he quoted his favourite text (Hos. vi. 6).

Was it on that day that he saw a man working in the fields, and when they asked him whether it was right, he turned to the workman and said: "Man, if you know what you are doing, you are blessed; if not, you are cursed as a transgressor of the Law"? If the man understood the liberty which Jesus, as Lord of the sabbath, could give, that was good; but if he was merely breaking the Law as he knew it, Jesus could not approve.

In passing through the cornfield they were on their way to the synagogue. The Pharisees now went with them, full of suspicion and dislike. In the synagogue there was a man whose hand was withered up. The Pharisees actually provoked him to heal the man by asking him if it was lawful to heal on the sabbath. Jesus was roused to real anger to see these narrow and bitter men more anxious for their Law than for a suffering fellow-creature. He called the man into their midst, and, his eyes aflame, he said: "Is it lawful to do good or to do evil, to save or to kill, on the sabbath day? You allow a man to pull his sheep out of a pit on the sabbath. And here is a man, worth all the sheep in the world!" They were awed and

silent. And Jesus said: "Stretch out your hand!" The man did so, and the hand was cured.

His enemies were ashamed and silent, but they hated him the more. The Pharisees went out and discussed with the Sadducees, who were at Herod's court, how they might *kill him.*

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CHAPTER XIII

JESUS TELLS WHO HE IS

A WHOLE year had passed since Jesus began his work at Capernaum. And now it was April again. The land was full of flowers, and the birds were singing. Everywhere you could hear the wandering voice of the cuckoo filling the vales. And everybody was going up to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover. Jesus went with the rest. There was much talk about him, and the priests and Pharisees at Jerusalem were ready to watch him and to accuse him; for their messengers who had been watching him in Galilee had brought back word that he ought to be killed. Yes, you may well be astonished at this strong language; but from their point of view he had committed four offences, two of which were capital, that is, deserved death. Let us put down these charges, and see if they seem to us dreadful—

1. He had forgiven sins, which only God could do.

2. He had mixed with sinners, like the tax-gatherers.

3. He had spoken as if fasting did not much matter.

4. He had broken the sabbath, and excused his followers for doing it.

The first was blasphemy and could be punished with death; the last was to the Jews the worst of sins. For in the wilderness had not a man been stoned to death for gathering sticks on the sabbath? You can fancy, therefore, how all the rulers were watching Jesus, when he came up to Jerusalem; and as he went along his way of divine pity and love they soon found a new reason for attacking him. There was in the city, near the Sheep Gate, which opened on to the valley of the Kedron, a wonderful pool. It was fed with water from the hills, which every now and then came in with a rush, and the pool bubbled and hissed, like a lake in a wind. There was red in the water, owing to the presence of iron, but the people said that the colour came from the blood of the sacrifice in the temple hard by. Stories were told of the pool with its sudden commotion, and its blood-red tinge. They said, for instance, long after the time of which we speak, that when Adam was dying, Seth went to the Garden of Eden to seek a bough of the tree of life. But he came back too late, and planted the bough on his father's grave.—When Solomon built the temple the

tree was cut down, but as it would not fit in anywhere, it became a bridge over the stream. When the Queen of Sheba walked by she would not cross that bridge because she saw that the Redeemer of the world would suffer thereon. Then it was thrown into the pool and gave it a power to heal. At last it was taken out and made into a cross for Jesus. The Jews had a great fancy for such tales, and we all enjoy them, even when we know they are not true. Certain it was, that sick people were healed by bathing in the pool, when the gushes of chalybeate water came in, and therefore invalids were always gathered about it; and five porches were made in which they could lie and wait. For this reason the pool was called House of Mercy, or Bethesda; and they said that the rush of the water was due to the touch of an angel, who visited the place from time to time.

Jesus turned naturally to this spot, because his heart was with the sick and suffering. The first sabbath day he was in Jerusalem he went among the sorrowful company, blind and lame and paralysed. He longed to heal them. And one especially filled him with pity, a man who was so paralysed that he could hardly hobble; he had been in that state thirty-eight years, coming to the pool day after day, in the hope that he might get in and be healed. Hope

deferred makes the heart sick, and Jesus felt for him. He said gently to the poor helpless creature: "Do you want to get well?" "Sir," said the man, "I have no one to help me into the water when it is stirred; always some one steps in before me." This was his fixed idea, and so it would have been no doubt until he died. Jesus pitied his suffering, but he pitied still more the sin which so long ago had brought on the paralysis. Sharply he said: "Get up and carry your mat, and walk." The order entered the mind of the helpless creature like a stream of health. He obeyed, as if he had been lifted from the ground. Yes, he took up the mat on which he had been lying, and walked! The watchful rulers saw him carrying the mat. According to their Law nothing could be carried on the sabbath, in the right hand or in the left, in the bosom or on the shoulders. They did not care about the healing, but they cared very much about breaking the sabbath; and they took the man to task. He replied: "But the one who healed me told me to take up my mat and to walk." He thought that the wonder of walking after being helpless for so many years might excuse anything. But the ruler angrily asked, "Who was it?" The man did not know, for Jesus after his deed of pity and love quietly slipped

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"GET UP AND CARRY YOUR MAT AND WALK"

[To face p. 116]

away from the crowd that gathered about the pool.

But he held the man in his heart and looked for him everywhere. At last he found him in the temple, and said to him: "You are made well; sin no more, lest something worse happen to you." That man was not likely to sin any more; but he did in his thoughtlessness what was a poor reward to Jesus for what he had done. He went to the rulers who had asked who it was that had healed him; went, no doubt, to show these worthy and religious men what a good and loving person was among them. It was Jesus, he said. But while they thought nothing of the sufferer and the cure, they thought everything of that broken sabbath; and they made up their minds more firmly to hound Jesus down, and bring him to the punishment of death. It seems that what brought them to this conclusion was a thing which Jesus said in reply to them at this time: "My Father works hitherto and I work." His Father was God. And as God is always working, with the morning, and the seasons, and the growing trees, and the food for man and beast, and all the other untiring works of nature, so *he* worked, healing, blessing, saving men. What they objected to in this beautiful saying was that Jesus called God his Father in a special

and peculiar sense, making himself equal to God. "You speak," they said, "as if you and you alone were 'he son of God.'" They would not have minded if he had said that they were all sons of God. But that he should be the Son of God, in a way that they were not, made them angry. They called it blasphemy. "But that is so," said Jesus. "The Father and the Son are so close together, that the Son can do nothing without the Father; the Father shows the Son what He is doing and going to do; the works of the Son will fill them all with wonder."

Then he told them that he could make the dead live, as his Father can; and that he would judge men, for his Father; and that the honour paid to the Father must be paid to him, the Son. "Yes, indeed," he said, "whoever hears my word and believes Him who sent me has everlasting life and comes not into judgment, but is passed from death into life."

"Yes, indeed," he added, "the time is close at hand when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they who hear shall live. The Father has given his life to the Son, and his power to judge men. And one day the dead will come out of the tombs at his voice, they who have done good to a resurrection of life, they who have done ill to a resurrection of judgment."

JESUS TELLS WHO HE IS 119

No one ever spoke like this before or since. Jesus declared that he was in the world as God, so closely bound up with God, that he could do nothing without God, and what he did and said God was saying and doing. God was his witness; though he was speaking himself he was not giving witness to himself, but God was giving witness to him.

Shall we see how Jesus proved that he was thus acting as God in the world? For though the rulers of Judaism were too set in their own way to be convinced, millions of people were convinced, and are convinced to-day, that what he said was true.

Well, there were three witnesses to him, apart from the Father, who was his real witness—three witnesses which might convince those to whom he was then speaking. These are the three witnesses:—First, John the Baptizer. They looked on him as a bright and shining light; they went to him as a prophet to teach them; and he had told them that there stood among them one whom they knew not, the one who was to baptize with fire and Spirit, the one who was the Lamb of God to take away the sins of the world. "My ministry," said Jesus, "began a year ago from the baptism which I received from John in the Jordan." But that was not all. In the second place, the works

which he had done during the year showed who he was. One of their own number had said to him: "No man can do these works that you do, unless God be with him." He had been healing and blessing men all the time, just as he had healed the helpless man at Bethesda recently. "These things," he said, "show that my Father has sent me—and when you do not believe me, you show that you do not know the voice or the nature of God." Yes, Jesus said that if men cannot see and hear God in him, they cannot see or hear God anywhere or at all.

But there was a third proof which ought to have been enough for those to whom he was speaking. There were the Scriptures, what we now call the Old Testament. The Scribes pored over these writings, counted the letters, preserved the very mistakes in the writing, and said that the Law at any rate, viz. the Five Books of Moses, had been written by the finger of God and handed to Moses out of heaven. No one ever paid such reverence to a book as these Jewish Rabbis paid to the Law of Moses. But unfortunately in studying the letter they had lost the spirit. What they thought of was the glory of being the students of the Law, to be pointed out as men who knew the Law. The love of God, which was everything, they

did not know. The Law without love was a terror, not a blessing. And now when the Son of God had come to them, the Scriptures, which were all speaking of him, stood between him and them; they could not recognize him for the Scriptures. That very Law, which they thought was written by Moses, had really pointed all the time to the very one who was now before them, and they could not recognize him. That Law always said that a Prophet like unto Moses should come, and to him all must listen. That prophet had come; it was Jesus. That Law had said, "There shall come forth a star out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel" (Num. xxiv. 17). That star, that sceptre, was before them in Jesus. That Law had given precepts which were like the alphabet, out of which a better law would be spelt: that better law Jesus had been preaching in Galilee.

That Law had ordered offerings and sacrifices to be made in the temple of Jerusalem, but they were all only pictures or types of something better and greater, as any wise reader of the Law might see. And there before them, in the simple form of Jesus, was the fulfilment of the Law, the end of the Law, the temple, the priest, the sacrifice, the laver, all that had been given in a figure to Moses—and the prophets—long ago.

These Scriptures testified of him.

Thus Jesus showed who he was, the Son of God, and proved it by John, whom they counted a prophet, by his works which they could not deny, and by the Scriptures which they revered as the word of God. But they would not believe.

CHAPTER XIV

THE TWELVE APOSTLES

WHEN he came back from the Passover to Capernaum Jesus found himself very popular. Not only did the people of the place want to hear him and to be healed by him, but pilgrims began to come from all over the land, from the South, Judæa and Jerusalem, from the East, Idumæa and the other side of the Jordan, and from the North-west, Tyre and Sidon, eager to see the Teacher and the Healer. The crowd was often so great that he could hardly move about, and he had frequently to get into the boat to teach, because the people on the shore thronged him. They seemed to fall upon him in their excitement, trying to touch him, that their diseases might be cured (Mark iii. 7-10).

But the rulers were all the more unfriendly to him, and he began to see that they would not rest until they got rid of him. They had made up their minds that he should die. He therefore resolved to choose from the disciples who were gathering to him in great numbers a small group of twelve, whom he would teach and train to carry on his work when the day

should come of which he had spoken, and "the bridegroom should be taken away from them."

This was the way in which he made the choice.

Rising to the west of Capernaum were the high hills of Galilee. One of these, called to-day "The horns of Hattin," stands out so strikingly that it is supposed to be "the mountain" mentioned in the Gospel (Mark iii. 13). To this mount Jesus went one evening; it was to him a sacred place: indeed Luke calls it "the prayer-house of God" (Luke vi. 12). There he passed the whole night with God. He was praying. The choice of the Twelve was the most important step he had yet taken, and the choice must be made by his Father in heaven. He had told his disciples to come to him there in the morning, and when he met them he at once singled out twelve, to whom he gave the name which has become so famous, a name which means messengers, people sent on an errand. These twelve Apostles were his messengers, first of all to his own countrymen, and, when he had gone away, to the world. He chose them in couples, for his plan was to send them two together to the different towns and villages, to proclaim his message and to do his work, and in this way to prepare them to act alone. They were all young men, under thirty, and probably some of them were under

twenty. Let us try to draw the portraits of these simple Syrian youths who have become the most famous names in history, simply because Jesus chose them on that spring morning on the height of Kurûn Hattin.

First in importance was *Simon*. He is called by Chrysostom "the mouth of the apostles." Jesus gave him a new name, which means a Stone, in Hebrew Cephas, in Greek Petros, because he meant him to become strong and firm, like the foundation-stone of a building. He was impulsive and eager, and very apt to make mistakes, but he could love warmly, and Jesus had entirely won his heart. Not clever or learned, he found it hard to open his mind. He was earnest and narrow. But for forty years he toiled for Jesus, and at last, so tradition tells, was crucified by Nero in Rome. When they were nailing him to the cross he said: "Put me head downwards, for I am not fit to be crucified as my Master was." This is the one apostle whom we really *know*.

Simon's brother *Andrew* came next, Andrew who first brought Simon to Jesus: but of him we know nothing else, except that a legend says that he too was crucified for the sake of Jesus at Patræ in Achaia, and hung for two days on the cross before he died, during which time he continued to preach Christ to the people. Simon

and Andrew were fishermen from Bethsaida, the harbour of Capernaum probably.

Then came *James*, another fisherman from Bethsaida; he was afterwards killed by Herod Agrippa (Acts xii. 2) for the sake of Jesus; but during his life he was overshadowed by his far more interesting brother *John*. John, like Andrew, had been a disciple of the Baptizer, but from the time that he saw Jesus he loved him, and was beloved by him. The two brothers were the sons of Zebedee and Salome, and as Salome was the sister of Mary, they were the cousins of Jesus. These two young men were hasty and violent; they wanted to destroy those who would not believe in their Master (Luke ix. 52-55), and Jesus gave them in a playful way the nickname "Sons of Thunder." A very early writer, Papias, tells us that John also was killed by the Jews. We may suppose, therefore, that these four all laid down their lives for the Master who chose them that morning.

We can see that Jesus treated Peter and his two cousins James and John as his own personal friends; they were with him on many occasions when the rest were not.

Next came *Philip*, also from Bethsaida, whom Jesus had found on that first return journey from Jerusalem. He was a dull young fellow, but honest and useful. Jesus gave him

the humble task of providing food for the little band (John vi. 8). He could not get it out of his mind that Jesus meant to be a king and to astonish the world by coming in pomp and power, and he was very slow to grasp the thought that Jesus was what he was (John xiv. 8, 9). Coupled with him was Nathanael, whom Jesus had also found on that first homeward journey, a man from Cana (John xxi. 2), the son of Talmai; usually he was simply called the son of Talmai, that is, *Bartholomew*; he was the Israelite in whom there was no guile.

Then came a young man whose name was Judas, but as he was a twin, he was called by that term, *Didymus*, or in Hebrew *Thomas*. His portrait is drawn by a few touches in John xi. 16; xiv. 5; xx. 24-29; xxi. 2. He was gloomy and full of complaints. He doubted everything, but was at last convinced who Jesus was by a wonderful thing which we shall see later. With him was coupled the tax-gatherer, Levi, or as Jesus called him, *Matthew*. It is very touching to us that in the Gospel which came from him, and in that alone, he is called Matthew the tax-gatherer (Matt. x. 3). Just as Paul or Bunyan called himself "the chief of sinners," this disciple never forgot that he had been called as an outcast, despised and hated by every one except Jesus.

Then came another *James*, evidently a short man, for he was called "Little James" to distinguish him from the cousin of Jesus. It is said that he too was one of the hated tax-gatherers, probably he who was brought to Jesus by Matthew. His father's name was Alphæus, or Clopas (John xix. 25), one of the two whom Jesus met and talked to on the road after his resurrection.

And with him was another *Judas*, but to distinguish him in the band he was called the hearty one, or the brave one, Libbai, or Taddai. We know him only by one question he put to Jesus (John xiv. 22). He is the most shadowy of the twelve.

Then came another *Simon*, who had to be distinguished from Simon Peter. He was therefore called the Cananæan, or in Greek, the Zealot. He had belonged to that society of desperate patriots who, after the taxing of A.D. 7, banded themselves against the Roman Government, and were known as Zealots. The tax-gatherers, Matthew and the Little James, were the slavish tools of the Government, this Simon was the fierce opponent of the Government. But Jesus drew both parties into his service.

With Simon the Zealot was *Judas*, the man of Kerioth, a town in the south of Judæa. He

was the only Jew, in the strict sense of the term, among this group of Galileans. He carried the purse, and was ruined by his love of money; for he afterwards received a bribe to betray Jesus. Jesus knew his character from the first, but he chose him in order to show how the love of money will make a man the enemy of God, and a traitor to the Son of God.

The number was twelve because there were twelve patriarchs, and twelve tribes in Israel. After calling them out by their names, and giving them the names by which he would know them, the Master gave them a charge, which we have in what we call the Sermon on the Mount. Would you like to see what he said to these twelve raw youths whom he meant to train and prepare to carry his message to mankind? Then read Matt. v. 1-16, and then look at the rest of the chapter, and see how it applies to these his ministers; and then read chap. vii., especially the beginning and the end. We wish, of course, we had the address as he gave it to them in that clear morning light; but we can only gather it from the teaching which is massed together in these three chapters of Matthew's Gospel.

This, however, is very plain. He told them: "You are blessed because you are *poor*." In Israel the pious were the poor, the needy, the

meek and the humble. "That is your blessing; when you are poor, sorrowing, gentle, hungering for righteousness, pure in heart, peacemakers, persecuted for righteousness' sake, reviled FOR MY SAKE, then you are really happy." Thus they knew what he was to them, and what they were to him, and they must expect to be like him, poor in this world, good, ill-used by men, and must wait until they came to the heavenly world for their reward.

Then he said to them—yes, to these twelve simple peasant people, who were now drawn to him—"You are the salt of the earth." Just as they had preserved their fish by salting them, so now they were to save the whole earth. But just as salt, that by wet or air had lost its saltiness, was rubbish, so they would only be of use if they kept their savour, that is, if they were kept close to him, and like him.

"You are the light of the world," he added. He was in the world as its light; so they were to be. In a house the lamp was put on the shelf, to shine; so they would have to shine, that men might know God, from whom their light came. All round the lake there were cities like Gerasa and Gamala, perched high on the hills, so that every one could see them far and wide. "You," he said, "are to be in such a position."

Then he told them how they would have to behave as his ministers. They must not resist evil done to them, but bear it without complaining. They must be ready to give to all who needed. They must do to others what they would wish others to do to them. They must not judge men, but love them. They must do good, and never despair of any one (Luke vi. 35)¹. They must not cast pearls before swine; that is, they must be careful in giving the message; and they must be on their guard against mere play-actors who pretended to be good and religious when they were not; but they must go on their way believing in people, and hoping for people, and telling them all, that the kingdom of God was coming, and that God was not only the King but the Father.

Then he ended by saying: "If you do this you will be like a house built on a rock." He was thinking of the name, Peter, which he had given to their leader. "The house will stand in the wind and the rain and the flood. But if you only hear what I say, and do not carry it out, you will be like a house built on the sand, which, when the flood and storm arise, is beaten down and disappears."

Thus he began to train these twelve young disciples to be his apostles.

¹ That is the real reading of this text.

CHAPTER XV

TEACHING THE TEACHERS

THIS second year of his ministry shows that now his first thought was to train his twelve apostles. This he did, not by putting them into a college, nor by giving them set lessons, but by being with them day by day and talking to them, as they walked, or rowed on the lake, or rested.

The rulers, and especially the Pharisees, showed their hatred more and more day by day; and Jesus, by his way of meeting them, was always teaching the apostles how they must face the opposition which would come to them when he had gone.

The first thing he had to teach them was—to pray. This was done chiefly by his example: he was always praying. He would go to the mountain and pray all night; or he would get up very early and pray till the sun rose. One morning, when he stopped praying, the disciples asked him to teach them. They said how the Jewish teachers taught their followers eighteen

prayers to say each day; and those who had been John's disciples said: "He taught us to pray, and one of the prayers was—

"God make me worthy of Thy kingdom, and to rejoice in it;
God show me the baptism of Thy Son.'¹

This prayer is still in our hearts; but teach us to pray as you do."

Jesus, strange to say, did not make a new prayer. But, drawing together several things from prayers which pious Jews had used, he taught the Twelve the words which we all know by heart. The prayer is so short that it is easily learnt and remembered.

The great thing in it is that we ask, first, for God's name to be hallowed and His kingdom to come and His will to be done, and second, for our own needs. The next thing in it is that we ask chiefly for ourselves only to be delivered from temptation and evil of all kinds, and the one earthly good we ask is bread for the coming day. The third thing is that we ask to be forgiven, as we forgive others—

"For all the blessed souls in heaven
Are both forgivers and forgiven."

This was the point which seemed most new. And yet even this had been taught by the name—

¹ This is in the Syrian Bodleian Manuscript, Pococke, 10.

sake of Jesus, the son of Sirach : "Forgive thy neighbour the hurt that he hath done thee; and then thy sins shall be pardoned when thou prayest" (Ecclus. xxviii. 2). But this was where the Master laid the stress. "You must forgive others," he said; "only so will God forgive you. If you are going to pray, and remember that you have a quarrel with your brother or your sister, you must go and make up the quarrel before you pray" (Matt. v. 23, 24).

This is how Jesus taught them to pray—to forgive all, to forgive everything, to forgive again and again, when people had done them wrong.

Then he showed them that they must be earnest in prayer and go on asking. I once heard of a little boy who asked God for something, and said : "Send it me in three weeks at the latest." Jesus said they might have to ask for longer than that. But the one thing certain was that if they went on God would answer their prayer. He gave this illustration to show how they must keep knocking, seeking, asking. A man had gone to bed, and his children were in bed, when a knock came at the door. It was a neighbour who wanted some bread for a friend who had arrived from a journey. "I can't get up and give it you," said the man.

But as the neighbour continued knocking, he did get up and gave him the bread. So, said Jesus, when you ask God, keep on asking; for God is much kinder than a friend, or even than a father. If you ask your father for bread he will not give you a stone, or if you ask for fish he will not give you the water-snake which the fishermen in the lake sometimes drew up in the net, or if you ask for an egg he will not put into your hand a little rolled-up scorpion that will unroll itself and sting you. No, every good father gives what is good to his children when they ask. God is the best of fathers: He will certainly give you what is good. If you ask Him for His own Holy Spirit, He will even give you that (Luke xi. 13).

This was what Jesus taught them at once about prayer. Later on he taught them that the Spirit would teach them to pray, and that they should ask things in his name, and God would grant them their requests for his sake.

Thus he began to teach them about the Spirit, who would be their teacher always when he was gone; and very soon he had an opportunity of telling them how the Spirit was God, and how they must treat Him. One day a poor lunatic, blind and dumb, was brought to him, and Jesus, in his loving way, healed him. It was so wonderful that everybody cried out: "This must

be Messiah." But the Pharisees were angry, and said: "He casts out demons by the help of the chief demon, Beelzeboul." Jesus read their thoughts, and gave this reply: "Would the chief demon cast out demons? Surely, if he did, he would be ruining himself. If, as you say, I cast out demons by Beelzeboul, by whom do your disciples cast them out? You know that you can only do this by God. Only by God can it be done. And if I do it, that shows that his kingdom is here. When a strong man holds the house, it is only a stronger that can enter and take possession. Only God can cast out Satan. There are only two powers, God and Satan; if any one is not with me, he is against me. If you are not with me, you are against me, against God. If you speak against me as a man, it can be forgiven; but now you are speaking against the Spirit of God, who dwells and works in me. Beware; blasphemy against the Spirit cannot be forgiven in this world or the next. The fruit of the tree is in this case good; the poor blind, dumb man sees and speaks. And you say that this good fruit comes, not from God's good Spirit, but from Satan! It is terrible to say such things, because the words show what is in the heart" (Matt. xii. 30-37). This teaching about the Holy Spirit sank into the minds of the

apostles, but the time had not yet come when they could know what it meant.

Soon after this another assault of the Pharisees gave another opportunity of showing the apostles the truth about the world of Spirit. They asked Jesus for a sign, as they had already done in Jerusalem. No, said Jesus, I will give no sign; the sign is already given in the story of Jonah the prophet. He preached to Nineveh, and the great heathen city repented. A greater than Jonah is preaching to you. And, he added, the Queen of Sheba came from the south to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and a greater than Solomon is here.

But here is the dread truth about the world of Spirit: these Pharisees, in the presence of Jesus, were like the lunatic who had just been cured. The truth had come; for a moment the evil spirit had gone out of them. But the evil spirit was returning with sevenfold power into their hearts, and their last state will be worse than the first. Yes, if the Spirit of God, as he was showing himself in Jesus, was not allowed to enter, the evil spirit would re-enter and take possession.

Jesus must have appeared very wonderful as he thus explained the world of Spirit, for a woman in the crowd suddenly cried out: "What a fortunate woman was your mother to have

such a son!" "No," was his reply, "blessed is the person who hears the word of God and keeps it." And this showed how Jesus had to separate himself from his relatives in order to do his work. These relatives, his mother and her sons, heard at Nazareth of all the excitement about Jesus and his ministry. They thought, like the Pharisees, that he was out of his mind (Mark iii. 21). That was the unkindest cut of all. To be hated by the rulers of the people and by their religious teachers was bad enough; but it was far worse to be considered mad by mother and brothers. It seems that they reached Capernaum on the very day of which we are speaking. They found him in the midst of such a crowd that they could not get near him. After waiting a long time in vain, they passed on a message to him that they were there. But he made this reply: "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" Then, pointing to the disciples who were gathered around him, he said: "These are my mother and brothers, for whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my mother, sister, or brother."

Yes, he was the Son of God, rather than the son of Mary or Joseph, and in order to do his work for God in the world he was obliged to put the earthly relations in their right place.

In this way he taught the apostles how they could not put even their parents before God; they must be ready to leave even their nearest and dearest to obey Him.

In this year also he began his new mode of teaching by parables. That is, he told stories to the people, stories which interested and charmed them and made them think. For in each story there was a deep meaning. And now it became his habit to gather the apostles round him in the evening and to explain the stories he had used during the day. His teaching to the people was more and more an object-lesson to the apostles, to teach them how to teach. At the same time the parables acted as a *levelling* of *the soil* for separating between the wheat and the chaff among the people. The people were eager for miracles and healing, but the appetite for truth and for God and for the Spirit had to be created. The stories roused curiosity, and drew to him those who really wanted to learn, while they kept the insincere and shallow away.

His first parable showed to the apostles what the hearers were really like.

Sitting in the boat on the shore and watching a sower on the hillside, he said: There is the sower scattering the seed: some falls on the beaten path, and the birds pick it up; some

falls on the rock, where it will spring up, but quickly wither; some falls on the uncleared ground, and it will grow with the weeds and be choked; but most of the seed falls on the good and prepared ground, and will bear a rich harvest, thirty, sixty, a hundred times what is sown.

The apostles were eager to know what this meant, and why Jesus had begun to use this new method. He explained to them; he was going now to devote himself to teaching them, leaving the multitude for a time alone. He thought this parable was so plain that they would have understood it; but as they did not, he told them. He was the sower, and he was sowing the truth of the kingdom of God. Some would not receive it at all: it would go in at one ear and out at the other. Some would receive it with joy, but as soon as difficulties came they would give it up. Some would receive it, but would let other things, worldly things, riches, cares and pleasures, choke it. But many, yes, very many, in a good and true heart would receive the word, and they would bring forth fruit to God according to their capacity.

Thus the apostles learnt their first lesson as spiritual seedsmen. They must sow in the morn their seed and at eve hold not their hand. They could not tell which would succeed. But

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as on the Nile-flood the seeds are sown, and when the waters fall the harvest appears in the rich soil, so Jesus and his apostles would cast their bread upon the waters, to see it after many days.

CHAPTER XVI

THREE GREAT WORKS

THRONGED by the people from the town and country who wanted to hear and to touch him, Jesus had difficulty even in getting his meals, and the careful training of the Twelve was almost impossible. One evening, therefore, after he had been teaching from the boat, he said: "Let us go over to the other side of the lake, just as we are." On the mountain which could be seen from Capernaum, the mountain of the morning sun, he would find quiet for prayer and for teaching his apostles. The boat set off for that farther shore, a distance of seven miles. But the people, seeing what he was doing, crowded into the other boats and followed him.

Now the lake is far below the sea-level, and shut in with mountains. Very often, as the hot air rises and the cooler air rushes down from the hills, the waters are lashed into sudden fury. Like a wild beast, the lake seems ready to devour all that is upon it. A waterspout will

rise and rush and burst. The waves will roar and crash as on the sea. And then, when the blast is over, calm will return as suddenly as it went.

Jesus that evening was so tired with his work that he sank down in the stern of the boat, and, with his head on the steersman's seat, fell fast asleep. All at once the wind broke on the water, darkening the sky, lashing the surface with rain, and piling up the waves in whirling masses. It was like an earthquake in the sea (Matt. viii. 24). The ships were literally covered with the waves, and seemed as if they would sink.

Jesus was in too deep a sleep to know what was happening. But the fishermen in terror woke him. "Sir," they cried, "save us; we are going down." He rose up, and first gave them a lesson in tranquil courage. "Why this cowardice," he asked, "men of little faith?" He was always astonished that men had so little faith in God (Matt. vi. 30, xiv. 31, xvi. 8). For himself, he knew that they were all in God's hands perfectly safe. Then he spoke to the angry lake as a master speaks to an angry dog. "Be muzzled," he said, "and be silent." The waves subsided, and as there had been a *great* commotion, now there was a *great* calm.

Not only his apostles in the boat with him,

but the men in the other boats, cried out: "What kind of a man is this that even the winds and the sea obey him!" It was plain that he was one with the Maker of earth and sky and sea.

Very early in the morning they reached the other side. There was a town called Gerasa—the name still survives in Khersa—not many hundred yards from the shore, and behind it rises the mountain, which descends steeply to the lake. In the face of the mountain were chambers in which the dead were buried; traces of them are still to be seen. Jesus landed and went towards the mountain for solitude and prayer. But there was an unexpected hindrance.

At that time madmen were not treated as we treat them now. Every one thought that they were possessed by demons, and, of course, the poor diseased minds thought so themselves. Driven out of the towns, they had to live in the chambers of the dead, and there they grew worse and worse, and were often dangerous to the living. At Gerasa there was a madman of this kind—Matthew says there were two—so violent that no fetters could bind him. His awful cries rent the air, and the people of the place were afraid to go by the tombs for fear of meeting him. His delusion was that he was

possessed by as many demons as there were soldiers in a Roman Legion, that is, about six thousand. In his talk he would be the voice of these supposed inhabitants of the body.

The madman ran up to meet Jesus, and fell at his feet. He had heard of him, and perhaps seen him, and now recognized him. Jesus knew that the way to help him was to fall in with his delusion. In kindly pity, therefore, he said: "Demon, go out of him." But this only increased the frenzy. Speaking as the demons, the madman said: "We have nothing to do with each other, we, the devils, and you, the Son of God most high. I adjure you, do not begin the torments which God inflicts on devils." Then Jesus, to calm him, asked his name. He gave the horrible answer: "Legion, for we are many." The diseased brain thought that it was a whole army of devils. What should Jesus do to help him?

Presently the madman's word gave him an opportunity. Speaking still as the legion of devils, he cried: "If you cast us out let us go into the swine there, and not out of the country into the desert or the abyss, where devils dwell." You can only understand this by knowing the strange superstitions of the ancient world about devils.

There were as many pigs in a herd grazing

on the hill-top as the poor man thought there were devils in him. If he could believe that the devils entered the swine, and especially if he saw them act as if it were so, that might be his cure. Jesus therefore seized on the thought; and instead of speaking to the man, he said in a tone of authority to the imaginary devils: "Go!" He spoke in such a way that the herd of swine took flight, and rushed pell-mell to the edge of the mountain, and, slipping down, pushed and trampled each other into the water; and, as pigs cannot swim, they were drowned. The dramatic scene had the desired effect. The man believed that the demons were gone, and he was quite sane. He got up, drew his clothes about him, and sat quietly at the feet of Jesus.

Jesus valued a man so highly that he thought it worth while to sacrifice a thousand pigs in order to heal one man. But, naturally, the swineherds did not think so. They ran to the town and woke the people with the story of their loss. The people crowded out to see what had happened, in a great fright. They thought the Healer must be a magician, and their one thought was to get him to go. "Leave us," they cried. "Leave us at once." Jesus had crossed the lake to get quiet; but he re-entered the boat to return. The grateful man who had

been cured wished to return with him. "No," said Jesus; "go home and tell what God has done for you." As he was leaving the place, Jesus did not mind the great miracle being mentioned; it was only when the excitement and crowding hindered his work that he told people to keep silence about the healing.

When he got back to the shore of Capernaum the crowd was immediately about him again. And here was another demand. One of the three rulers of the synagogue, named Jairus—he would be like a magistrate in an English town, a man of good position—was in the crowd. He actually fell at the feet of Jesus, forgetting his dignity and the general feeling of his class in his sorrow and anxiety. He had a little girl, twelve years old, lying very ill, at the point of death, at home. "Come and lay your hands on her," he cried piteously, "that she may get well and be spared to us." Jesus at once walked away with him, and the crowd followed with them, excited to see the Healer going to the house of their magistrate.

Jairus was in a great hurry, for if his daughter died he knew that it would be too late. But in the crowd was a woman, a foreigner from Cæsarea Philippi (they say her name was Veronica), who had travelled down to Capernaum, believing that if she could only touch

his clothes she would be healed of a disease that had troubled her for twelve years. The doctors of that time could not help her, though she had spent a mint of money on them.

In that crowd Veronica managed to touch the tassel of his cloak. And as she grasped it her faith was rewarded. She felt quite well. Jesus was so thronged at the moment that you might have thought he would not notice that trembling, eager clutch. But he did. Yes, he knew that the woman who had touched him needed healing for soul as well as body. He therefore said: "Who touched me?" Veronica, trembling and terrified, fell at his feet and said it was she, and he had healed her. Jesus, with beautiful tenderness, said: "Daughter, your faith has saved you. Go home in peace, and be well of your complaint."

The delay was not very great, but it prevented Jesus from reaching the house in time. Some servants hurried up to Jairus and whispered: "She's dead: why trouble the Teacher further?" Jesus overheard what was said, and comforted the heartbroken father. "Have no fear, only believe."

Arrived at the house, he took the three apostles, Peter and James and John—no one else—and entered. Though the death had only just taken place, the friends and professional



J.S.

"HE TOOK THE LITTLE HAND WHICH WAS GROWING COLD"

(To face p 148)

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mourners were there, making a terrible noise, howling, tearing their hair and their clothes, and doing what was thought the right thing.

Jesus disapproved of the noise and the mourning. He did not speak of death; he called it sleep. But when he said to the mourners, "She is only asleep," they laughed at him. Their grief was put on, and it turned very rapidly into derision. But Jesus, in his commanding way, drove them all out, just as he drove the traders out of the temple; and, with Jairus and his wife and Peter, James and John, he entered the death-chamber. Without a moment's delay, he took the little hand, which was growing cold, and said: "Dear little girl, I tell you, get up." The child rose; and Jesus said: "Give her some food." She rose, and was able to walk. Jesus was most anxious that they should say nothing about it. He wanted to comfort the parents and to recall the little girl to life, for that was in this case possible; but nothing did he want less than that people should think that his mission was to bring the dead to life on this earth.

The day's work, however, was not yet over. Jesus left the house to go to his own home. As he walked rapidly through the street, two blind men followed him and cried out: "Have pity on us, son of David!" These blind men

evidently believed that Jesus was Messiah, for that is the meaning of "son of David." But Jesus was so anxious to avoid further excitement that day, as well he might be, that he took no notice. They followed him to the door of Peter's house, and actually pushed in with him.

No one ever appealed to Jesus for mercy in vain. Bringing them into his room, he said to them: "Do you believe that I can cure you?" "Yes, sir," they both exclaimed. Then he touched their eyes, and said: "According to your faith let it be to you!" And their eyes were opened so that they could see.

The Healer was more sternly resolved that this should not be known than he was in the case of Jairus. But the two men could not keep it silent. They went out and told every one they met.

You can see how difficult it was for Jesus. He wanted to help men, but not to be talked about. He could not refuse to heal and to bless; but every deed of love raised a fresh excitement, and made it harder for him to do his own work. He wanted to teach his apostles and to prepare them for the time when he would leave them; but he could not keep off the multitude of people who needed his immediate help.

In this difficulty he tried again a tour through

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the neighbouring towns, and afterwards, as we shall see, even withdrew for a time out of Galilee into the neighbouring districts of Decapolis and Sidonia. His days were too full: the demands on him were too great.

CHAPTER XVII

HOW THE WOMEN HELPED HIM ; AND HOW HE SENT OUT HIS APOSTLES TWO BY TWO

You can fancy what excitement there was at Capernaum after those three wonderful works : such excitement made it very difficult for Jesus to go on with his real work of teaching his disciples. He therefore left home again and went along the Lake-road to the south as far as Magdala. The name of Mejdal still reminds us where this wealthy but evil town stood. When he arrived the fame of the raising of Jairus' daughter had gone before him, for Jairus was, as we saw, a leading man. A friend of his, of the same social position, in Magdala, named Simon, a Pharisee, asked him to his house for a meal. There were three Pharisees who invited him to their houses, as you see by looking at Luke vii. 36, xi. 37, xiv. 1. But we cannot tell that it was ever done in a friendly spirit. It may have been in order to catch him in a trap. At any rate this Pharisee of Magdala was rude to his guest. The hospitality of the time required

that the host should kiss his guest, order the servants to take off his shoes and wash his feet, and then offer him a rich unguent, or at least pure olive-oil, for his head. These courtesies Simon omitted, as if to show the Teacher from Capernaum that he felt it a condescension to entertain him at all. In the Eastern house you enter into a courtyard, and the living-rooms are open, very much like a restaurant or café. Passers-by can see what is going on, and can come up to the table where the household are eating, without being thought rude.

The meal was served in the usual way. A low table was spread, and the guests lay on low couches, or divans, leaning upon their left arms, so that with the right they could help themselves to food. The table was a kind of horse-shoe shape, so that the attendants could serve the diners from within. Thus the bare feet of those at the table (for they put off their shoes) would be stretched out on the couches far from the table. Now a woman in the town, who had heard Jesus speak, one of the bruised whose hearts he had come to bind up, full of gratitude and love to him, came quietly into the house; she brought with her an alabaster box full of myrrh ointment. Directly the guests were reclining at the table, she took up a place at the feet of Jesus. Tears were pouring down

her cheeks, tears of sorrow for her sins, and of gratitude to the One who had saved her from them. The tears fell on the bare feet of Jesus; and in her reverent love for him, she loosed her long hair, and wiped the feet; then she knelt down and kissed them, and with the fragrant myrrh, made into a soothing ointment, she smeared them.

Jesus took no notice of this loving service, but Simon his host did. Simon was a Pharisee, who would not even have spoken to a woman in public, and would have felt himself disgraced by the caresses of a woman of the town. He knew what kind of a woman this was, for a respectable woman would never have come in uninvited, or loosed her hair in company. He was not rude enough to say anything, but his look showed what he thought. He did not suspect the Teacher of any familiarity with this poor degraded woman—no one ever could even fancy Jesus guilty of sin; but the thought written on his face was: "This man cannot be a prophet [that is, a God-sent teacher], as he is reputed to be, or he would have felt defiled by a woman of this kind, and would have known just what she was." It was beyond the thought of the Pharisee that Jesus could have known what the woman was, and what she was becoming, and that he took her tears and lowly

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service as the sign that she was a changed character.

Now Jesus said to his host: "I have something to say to you!" "Certainly, Teacher, say what you will," he said loftily. It was a very simple illustration Jesus offered. There were two debtors; one owed five hundred, and the other fifty, *denaria* to a creditor—that is, one owed twenty pounds and the other two. The generous creditor let them both off, as they could not pay. "Which of them will love him best?" asked Jesus. "Oh, I suppose the one who was excused the most!" answered Simon airily. "Right!" said Jesus; then for the first time he turned round to the woman at his feet. "Look at her loving service to me, and look at your service. You did not offer me water for my feet, nor even oil for my head; you did not give me even the most formal kiss. She washed my feet with her tears, wiped them with her hair, anointed them with myrrh, and has continued kissing them all the time. What does it mean? It means she is forgiven much. Her big debt is wiped out, and she loves the One who has done this for her. You do not love because you are not forgiven, and do not think that you need to be. Yes," he said, speaking now to the grateful, loving creature, "your sins are forgiven." All who were at the

table were startled, and showed it by the expression on their faces. "Who is this who remits sins?" But he calmly added to the woman: "Your faith has saved you; go in peace." This was, we suppose, Mary of Magdala, who is mentioned in Luke viii. 2, or, as we call her, the Magdalene. She had been so bad that, according to the language of the time, there had been "seven devils" in her. She was just as bad as she could be; but Jesus had made her good. Afterwards she returned to her home, in Bethany, near Jerusalem, and with Lazarus and Martha, her brother and sister, received the Master again and again. Just before the last scene in the life of Jesus she repeated the act which had marked her conversion, and Jesus described it as "a beautiful work" done for his burial (John xii. 3). You will notice that the Synoptic Evangelists are very careful not to refer much to this beloved family at Bethany, because Lazarus was in danger from the hatred of the Jews. But John, writing many years after, when Lazarus and Martha and Mary had all gone home, tells us a good deal about them (John xii. 9-11).

Thus, all through the Gospel story, we see this saved woman, Mary Magdalene, at his feet thanking him, at his feet learning, at his open tomb, the first to see him risen.

Jesus soon left Magdala to preach to the other towns and villages of Galilee; but there was now a change in his company. His twelve apostles were with him in training; but some of the women whom he had saved went with him too. Mary of Magdala, of course; but also a lady of high position named Joanna, the wife of Chuza, a royal officer, who may have been the courtier mentioned in John iv. 46; but that we cannot be sure of; Susanna also is named, and there were many more (Luke viii. 3). But the touching thing is that these well-to-do ladies supplied Jesus with money for the journey. He was willing to be supported by those who had been saved by him. He gave them goods so rich that they were ready to give him all their earthly goods.

We cannot follow the little caravan all the way; but in the course of the tour they came to Nazareth, where Jesus had been brought up. Here Mary his mother was living, and here were all his brothers and sisters. They were far from friendly to him, since he had said that every one who did the will of his Father was his mother, or sister, or brother. Still he went as usual to the synagogue. And invited to speak by the minister, he sat down, while all eyes were anxiously fixed upon him, their fellow-townsmen who was attracting such

attention. He began to speak about the passage of the prophet that had just been read. It was Isa. lxi. 1, 2, but he also slipped in lviii. 6. He said that he was the One mentioned in the prophet: "The Spirit of God was upon him; he was anointed to bring good news to the poor, to preach deliverance to captives, sight to the blind, to set at liberty the bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord" (Lev. xxv. 10). It was a gracious sermon. He had with him from Capernaum, Cana, Magdala, the men and women whom he had delivered and healed and brought to God. He was ready to bring the same glad news to his own town. But there was a buzz of questions in the synagogue. The people were not inclined to receive as a Teacher, and even Saviour, one whom they had known from boyhood. Jesus read their thoughts: they were saying, according to the proverb, "Physician, heal thyself, let him do in his own town what he had done at Capernaum." He capped this proverb with another, that no prophet is acceptable in his native place. Then he quoted from Scripture how Elijah went to the woman in Sarepta, and Elisha healed Naaman the Syrian, instead of native Israelites. They saw what he meant; and, in their wounded pride, they rose and hustled him out of the synagogue and out of the town to the hill of

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Precipitation, intending to throw him down and kill him. But he quietly slipped away, and left his poor deluded fellow-townsmen with pity in his heart for them as sheep weary and scattered and without a shepherd.

After this rejection at Nazareth while he was still on his tour, he took his twelve apostles, divided them into six pairs, and sent them by themselves through the towns and villages in six different directions. They were not to go outside Galilee. He was training them under his own eye for world-wide work when he should leave them in the world behind. On this mission they were to travel rapidly and not to take any luggage. With a staff in their hand, and sandals on their feet, and no change of clothing, they were to go swiftly along the road, not waiting for the lengthy greetings which the custom of the time required. They were to speak the word which cast out unclean spirits as he did himself, they were to anoint sick people with oil and heal them; and everywhere they were to call the people to repentance. When the couple came into a town, they were to accept the hospitality offered them, to bless those who received them, and to leave those who did not, shaking the dust off their feet as they left the town, as a witness to them. Then they were to come back to him and report.

This was their training; in this way they were to be prepared for their later missions all over the world. Many of the things he said to them on this occasion he says to all his disciples now and always. They would be unprotected, like sheep in the midst of wolves. They would be persecuted; for their message would often bring, not peace, but division. One in a family would hear the divine voice, and the rest would turn against him. The houses would be torn in two, and people would say, "Is this the good news? Is this the kingdom of God?" But they need not fear, for they would be safe in the keeping of God. Four sparrows were worth twopence, and an odd one was thrown in. Even that fifth cannot fall without God's knowledge. But these disciples of his were dearer to God than sparrows; their very hairs were known and numbered. They might be at peace when they were rejected, even as he had been rejected at Nazareth. They had to bear a cross as he had. They might have to die, to lose their lives, but they would find their life again; though they were killed, not a hair of their heads should perish.

As they put him first, and went out to do his work, to heal and to save and to help men, they would be like their Master; like him they would suffer and bear; like him they would be

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received or rejected; like him they would in the end gain the day.

Thus he taught and prepared them, and practised them in the work which he himself had come to do. They did it very poorly at first, no doubt; but wherever they went there were cures, and some people listened, and a few repented.

CHAPTER XVIII

HOW SLOW MEN WERE TO UNDERSTAND JESUS

WHEN the twelve apostles had set out on their 'rial mission, Jesus continued his own tour through Galilee with the other disciples and the devoted women. One of the first places he came to was Nain. It is only seven miles from Nazareth, and lies between Endor, where the witch lived, and Shunem, where the great lady entertained the prophet Elijah (2 Kings iv.). The burial-ground is still seen a mile east of the town. As he and the crowd entered the town they met another crowd. It was a funeral. A widow woman was taking her only son to be buried. She was in front, crying. Jesus was immediately filled with pity. He felt for her as he had felt for Jairus; he could not bear to let the bright young lives pass away; and he saw that in this case the boy was all the mother had. He stopped and spoke to her: "Dry your eyes," he said. Then he touched the bier on which the dead body was being carried; and the bearers stopped. Then

he spoke to the boy who lay there dead. "I bid you rise," he said. The corpse sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave the restored youth back to his mother. The sensation in the two crowds was tremendous. They were all afraid, as in the presence of God. But they began to praise God, and his Prophet, as they called him. And the whole neighbourhood heard, and was as excited as Capernaum had been over the raising of Jairus' little girl.

But excitement does not mean faith, and Jesus now had a painful proof of the slowness of men to believe on him. John the Baptizer had been lying in the splendid castle of Machærus for nearly two years. Herod Antipas dared not kill him, because all the people believed in him. Indeed, whenever he visited Machærus, which was his strongest and finest residence, he had the prisoner brought to him, and listened to all that he had to say to him. For Herod, though a bad man, still had a conscience. He allowed John's disciples to visit him, and they told him of the work of Jesus, whom he had baptized.

Now perhaps in the prison his heart sank; or perhaps it was that he expected Christ to be a mighty reformer and a martyr for truth, and the wonderful stories of his healing and preaching were not what he thought evidence of the

Messiah. Certainly Jesus was very different from John the Baptizer, though John was always ready to make way for the One greater than himself. In any case the poor prisoner doubted whether after all Jesus, whom he had baptized, was the Christ whom he had expected. He sent, therefore, two of his disciples to ask him plainly (Luke vii. 18). They found Jesus in the midst of his crowded ministry; they saw him at work. His answer to his Forerunner was this: "The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor are evangelized." And then, with a sad reproach to the man who had come to announce him to the world: "Blessed is he who does not take offence at me!" The two messengers returned; and the prisoner was sure that this was the Christ whom he had expected.

When they were gone, Jesus said some wonderful things about John. He was no reed shaken by the wind: he was no courtier speaking smooth things to the king. He was a prophet; he was the prophet foretold by Malachi (iii. 1), who was to prepare the way of the coming Lord. No man was greater than he. "But," Jesus added, "the lesser, as he seems, in the kingdom of God"—meaning himself—"is greater than he." John roused the

Zealots (Luke xvi. 16), and made men think that they could enter the kingdom by violence. John was an ascetic, and made men believe that they could win salvation by fasting; and thus he broke some of the commandments of the kingdom of God, in ignorance, and taught men so. Jesus could not therefore treat John as his own equal; he had to go beyond John as he went beyond Moses. But he showed how great he was. And he said, how childish the people of that time were, like fretful children who would not play at the game that was proposed, whether a wedding or a funeral! When John came, fierce and fiery and fasting, they said: "He has a devil." When Jesus came, genial and friendly, and ready to save the worst of people—"He is a glutton and a wine-drinker, a friend of publicans and sinners," they said.

But the divine wisdom sees the use of both, John the Forerunner, and Jesus the Saviour (Luke vii. 35).

Shortly after this, Herod had John beheaded in the prison, to please his wife Herodias. You can read the horrible story in Mark vi. 21-29. This was in the year A.D. 28. The news of John's execution smote Jesus to the heart. For he now began to be quite sure that he would himself be put to death by the Jewish authorities. Returning to Capernaum, he waited for

his twelve apostles to come back, and then proposed that they should cross the lake, to get a little rest, and also because he heard that many of the excited people, convinced that he was the Messiah, wanted to make him a king; for their idea of Messiah was that of a king who would break the Roman yoke, and establish the throne of David in Jerusalem. Another reason for leaving Capernaum was that Herod, whose palace was at Tiberias, ten miles to the south, was showing some curiosity about Jesus. Some people had suggested to him that Jesus was John the Baptizer come to life again. Jesus had no intention of seeing Herod—"that fox," as he called him (Luke ix. 9).

He and the Twelve therefore sailed in the boat to Bethsaida Julias, on the left bank of the Jordan where it enters the lake. There was a grassy slope, and behind it rose the mountains. But the idea of getting rest was vain. The news spread that he was on the water, and the crowds gathered from all sides, so that when the boat came to the beach, the Teacher and Healer saw just the same sight that he left at Capernaum. His compassionate heart was moved. He landed, and climbed the hill; the people followed, and he went on till evening healing and teaching as usual. The crowd was partly made up of those who were forming

parties to go up to Jerusalem for the Passover, which reminds us that the second year of his ministry was drawing to an end (John vi. 4). When you think how his heart was aching for John, how he wanted rest and the opportunity to hear what the Twelve had been doing, you see what it meant for him to be thus surrounded day after day. The apostles said, when evening came: "Now send the people away to get their meal, and let us have a little peace." But Jesus said: "They need not go away, feed them yourselves." They were dismayed. Philip was the one who looked after the food for the apostles. "What will you do?" said Jesus to Philip. "Well," he said, "if we had eight pounds' worth of bread we might give each of them a taste." Then Andrew broke in: "There is a boy here with five barley loaves and two fishes; that might feed five men, but there appear to be about five thousand!" Each of the apostles had his little wallet, the *cophinus*, it was called, in which every Jew used to carry his food, that he might not eat what was common or polluted. Strange to say, the *cophini* were all empty to-day.

But Jesus had a thought in his mind. He intended to make a meal the sign by which his disciples would always remember him. And here was the opportunity, while the thought

of John's sudden death was in his mind, to sketch out for his disciples what he meant. "Make the people sit on the grass," he said, "in parties of fifty."

Then in a solemn way he took the bread and gave thanks—made it a eucharist—and had it distributed to the groups. He did the same with the fishes. The food multiplied in his hand, so that the whole company received as much as they wanted. When they rose from the grass, there were fragments left. "Gather up these fragments," said Jesus, "we must not be wasteful." The Twelve did so, and actually filled their *cophini* with them.

Who can wonder that the crowd became enthusiastic? They wanted at once to proclaim him king, and take him with them up to Jerusalem. To Jesus that feast was the foreshadowing of the Last Supper. To the people, in their blindness, it meant: "Here is the Messiah we are expecting, who can, like Moses, give us food in the desert." Jesus, knowing all this, said to the Twelve: "You must go back at once to Capernaum; I will dismiss the people, and spend the night alone on the mountain." They obeyed. But the wind was against them, and between three and six in the morning they were still out on the lake, toiling at the oars. Then suddenly they saw Jesus,

whom they had left on the shore, walking, as it seemed, on the sea. They thought it was a phantasm of the living, or perhaps of the dead! And they cried out in fear. But it was really Jesus. He was preparing them for the wonder of his resurrection; he was showing them that, though he was in the body, he was the Lord and Ruler of all things: "Do not be frightened," he said; "it is I." Peter, eager and rash as he was, said: "If it is you, Lord, bid me come to you over the waves." "Come," he said. Peter stepped out of the boat, but of course he sank. "Lord, save me," he cried. Jesus drew near, took him by the hand, and they entered the boat. "Little-Faith," he said to him, "why did you doubt?" All in the boat were overwhelmed with awe; especially as the wind fell, and they immediately reached the beach of Capernaum (Matt. xiv. 32). They fell at his feet and said: "Truly you are the Son of God." It was an exclamation of astonishment, but it was preparing the way for a real faith.

The people who had been fed took some boats that had come from Tiberias and made their way to Capernaum too, and next day, to their astonishment, they found that Jesus, whom they had left on the mountain at Bethsaida, was there.

It was the day of the synagogue meeting, and

Jesus spoke to them on what had happened. He told them he knew they sought him merely for bread; but he was the real Bread. The Rabbis talked of "eating the Messiah," by which they meant receiving him joyfully and learning what he taught. He was this Bread from heaven; they would have to eat and drink his flesh and blood if they would have the real life.

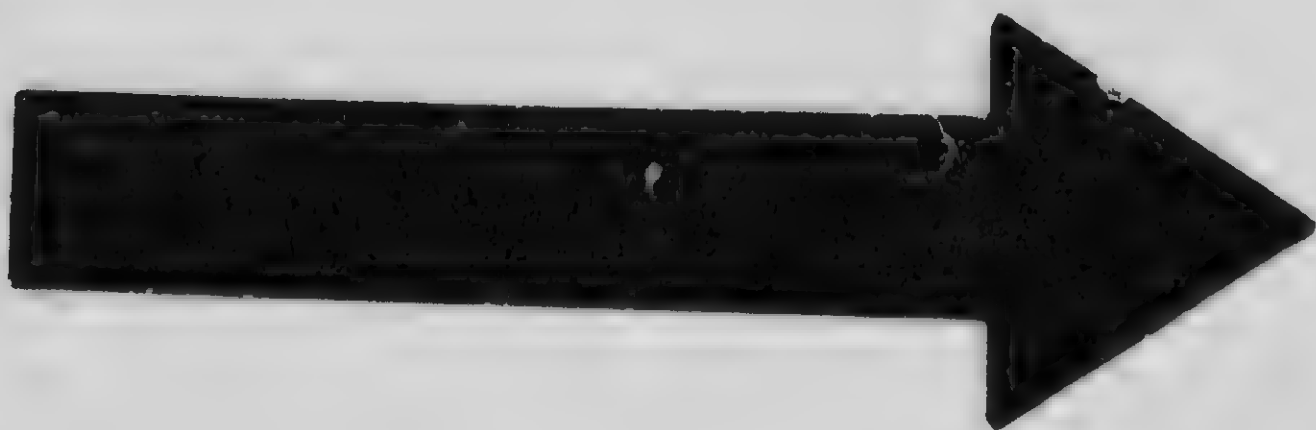
Many people took offence at this; even some who had been his disciples left him; some were stupid enough to think that he meant literally eating his human body and drinking his blood. Of course what he meant was that they must believe in him, obey his words which were spirit and truth, and let him live his life in them.

He turned to the Twelve and said: "Will you also go?" for he could see them wavering. Impetuous Peter said: "To whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life!" They were slow, and bewildered, but they were beginning to believe.

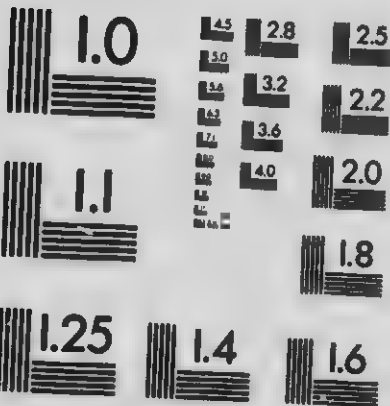
This exciting event prevented Jesus from going up to the Passover; and therefore the Sanhedrin sent some of its members to watch him more closely and find a ground of offence in him. This they easily did. According to their tradition, the worst of sins was to eat with-

out washing the hands. A good Jew in prison, with only enough water to drink, used it to wash and went thirsty! The apostles were careless on the point, and these fine Pharisees took Jesus to task. His answer cut them to the quick: "You make everything of the *outside*, but it is the inside that matters. You make everything of your *tradition*, but it is God's command which matters. You let men say that their money is Corban, that is a gift offered to God, and then excuse them from helping their parents. And that is your way in everything. But what enters the body by the mouth does not defile the man; it only enters the body and goes out again, with the body's growth and change. What defiles is the thought, the wish, the deed done in the heart. The things you eat are clean; they do not matter. The great thing is to get the heart clean, for that is what matters." This did not suit these careful and scrupulous religious teachers at all. They concluded that it was Jesus who was breaking the Law.

But, strange to say, the poor dull disciples could not understand it either. They thought it was a parable (Mark vii. 17)! Though it was all spoken in their defence, and they had been careless about washing their hands before eating, they still thought that the washing was very important, and could not imagine that Jesus



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really meant to say, that it did not matter what they *ate*, but it only mattered what was in their hearts.

The work at Capernaum was drawing to an end. Jesus knew perfectly how, in spite of the excitement and enthusiasm, he had not really won the people. They wanted signs and wonders and earthly blessings: he wanted to give them goodness, truth, salvation. All the authorities were against him; John the Forerunner had doubted him. And, saddest of all, his disciples left him, and even his chosen Twelve could not understand his plainest teaching.

We think we can see in this the reason why he resolved to leave the borders of his own country, with the Twelve, for a time.

CHAPTER XIX

THE GREAT CONFESSION

THE apostles were so slow to understand and to learn, and the pressure of the eager crowd was everywhere so great, that Jesus now made another attempt to get quiet for the training of his little company. This time he left the borders of Israel altogether and crossed into Phœnicia, the strip of coast country running northward from Mount Carmel, in which were the famous cities Tyre and Sidon, and lying between them Sarepta. It was a two days' journey from Capernaum, as far, in point of time, as if we travelled to the Tyrol for a little rest and quiet.

When the party reached this foreign country they found a lodging and attempted to live in retirement. But, alas! the fame of Jesus had reached Phœnicia through those who had heard and seen him in Galilee. And almost as soon as he arrived, a woman of the coun- came to his house and threw herself at his feet with a great request. She was Phœnician by birth,

but Greek by training; and she had the ardour of the Phœnician mingled with the ready wit of the Greek. As the whole object of Jesus being there was to escape from the crowd of sick and suffering who sought his aid, and to enter on the quiet teaching of the Twelve, this visit was most unwelcome. "Cast the devil out of my daughter," cried the woman. And Jesus saw at once that his fame as a healer was already in these foreign parts, and he might as well go back again to Galilee. He replied to her with a proverb which might make her see how he was placed: "It is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the whelps." He meant that his mission was to Galilee, which he had only left for a short rest, and he must not begin a work in this new and foreign country. But the woman's wit was sharpened by her love for her suffering child. She caught him up with another proverb. "True," she said, "but the whelps under the table eat of the crumbs of the children."

The wit was so bright, the humility and love and faith were so winning, that Jesus was delighted. His hesitation was gone; the thought of his own ease and the wish for retirement were vanishing. He at once answered: "For that word, go, and you will find the 'devil gone out of your daughter.'" She returned home at

once, and so it was: the distracted child was lying peacefully on her bed, healed. This beautiful and ready faith in a Gentile woman filled the heart of Jesus with a deep interest in the lands which lay beyond his own immediate mission, and instead of returning at once to Galilee, he travelled northwards through Sarepta to Sidon, and saw for the first time the glorious cedar-covered slopes of Mount Lebanon. This little holiday made a happy impression upon him. He saw that those heathen towns, Tyre and Sidon, were in some ways more hopeful for his work than his own Galilee (see Matt. xi. 20-22). He no doubt had the longing, which often haunts us all, to leave the work put into his own hand, and go into regions beyond. But nothing could turn him from his mission. After a little time of quiet teaching and intercourse with the Twelve, he led them down from Lebanon, across the Leontes to the sources of the Jordan; there he marked a retreat, to which he determined to return, near Cæsarea Philippi; but for the present the apostolic company traced the Jordan back to the familiar lake through the district known as Ten-Cities, or Decapolis.

His return was the signal for the crowd of curious hearers and needy sufferers to find him out and swarm around him. It amounted to

four thousand at the very least. The lame, the halt, the blind, the deaf, were all clamouring to be healed. One of these was a peculiarly pitiable object. He could not walk, he was deaf, and he stuttered. "Lay your hands on him," the people cried. Here we see Jesus healing at close quarters. He took the sufferer apart from the crowd, and put his fingers into his ears, touched his tongue with his own saliva, and, looking up to heaven, groaned. His pity for this miserable creature was as deep as his touch with him was close. Then he said one word in the vernacular language: "Ephphatha," which means "Open." The hearing returned, the tongue could speak distinctly, the man was healed. It was a hard task that Jesus gave to this released tongue: it was, not to mention what had been done, lest the excitement should again hinder the work. But it could not be silent, and the vast crowd assembled on the hillside by the lake broke out into a pæan—

"He has done all things well,
He makes the deaf hear, and the speechless speak"
(Mark vii. 31-37).

The crowd was now so excited that it would not disperse. For three days at a time the people hung about, never returning home for food. The unfailing pity of Jesus went out to

this mass of human beings who, in their response to his mission, forgot to eat bread. "If I dismiss them to their homes," he said to the Twelve, "they will faint by the way." Some of them had come a great distance, perhaps even from Phoenicia.

Jesus determined, therefore, again to feed the crowd by a miracle. "How many loaves have you?" he asked. "Seven," was the reply, and they had also a few small fishes. Here was another eucharist. The Master gave thanks, and broke the bread, and the Twelve handed it to the four thousand people. They ate and were satisfied, and yet the fragments filled seven large baskets (the *spuris* here is a Gentile word, not the Jewish *cophinus* of the former miracle).

But when he had done what pity dictated he dismissed the crowd, and with his disciples took ship for the southern shore of the lake, called Magadan or Dalmanutha, a solitary retreat, after the strain and excitement of the last few days. Though we do not know the place or where it was, the Pharisees somehow found him out, and came again with their old demand for a sign. It was the third time they had asked. On this occasion Jesus heaved a great sigh; after all he had done and said, what more could they require? "The signs of the times"

were surely plain enough. They knew the weather by the red of the sky. Could they not read the red of the dawn in what he was doing? No, he would give them no sign except that of Jonah, which he had already given them.

Abruptly leaving them, he called the Twelve to take ship again. The departure was so sudden that they forgot to take bread. There were thirteen miles before them from the southern to the northern shore. His mind was full of the recent scene with the Pharisees and Herodians. And he began to warn his apostles against the spirit which they had shown, "the leaven," as he called it, which was hypocrisy. The poor dull followers in the boat thought that he was referring to the purchase of bread. With a noble patience Jesus corrected them. "Do you not yet perceive or understand?" he asked. He reminded them of the two miracles he had performed with the bread that perishes. Could they not see that his concern was not with bread for the body, but with truth and righteousness and love?

But now they came to Bethsaida Julias, the large rich city which Herod had called after Julia, the daughter of Augustus—though Mark still calls it only a village (viii. 23). As he passed through a blind man was brought to him to be healed. Jesus took him by the hand

and led him into the country, and then, touching his eyes with his saliva, and laying his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw. "I see men, but they are like trees, walking." Then Jesus laid his hands on him again, and the man saw clearly. He was told not to go back into the town to say what had happened.

Now the apostles were all like this man, gradually opening their eyes, to see the truth about their Master. The time had come for opening their eyes, so that they might see clearly. The little company struck northwards to the district of Cæsarea Philippi, which Jesus had marked on his return from the Lebanon. This fine city, rebuilt and named after Cæsar by Philip the Tetrarch, was not far from the lofty cliff, from the base of which the waters of the Jordan gush out in a joyful and sounding stream. On the hill was a temple of Pan. In this spot, where the Jordan rose, rich with suggestions of Cæsars and antique gods, the religion of Christ sprang out from the Rock to flow through the world.

Walking in the country one day, Jesus asked his followers: "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" "Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, some Jeremiah, or one of the prophets," was the reply. "But who do you say that I am?" he urged. Then Peter, speak-

ing first as usual, said: "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." Yes, this was the conclusion they had reached after being with him for more than two years. They understood at last what John the Baptist had announced at the Jordan. In spite of John's doubt, and the opposition of the Pharisees and Sadducees, his own dull, slow apostles were convinced that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God.

Jesus blessed Peter, who had spoken these words, and said: "My Father in heaven revealed this to you." Then he said to Peter words which have been strangely twisted and ill-used. From the first Jesus had given to Simon the name which means Rock; and now he said: "On this Rock will I build my Church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Peter, by being the first to confess Christ, was the first stone in the building of the Church, as he saw and explained in his letter afterwards (1 Peter ii. 4, 5).

The Church, or company of those who confessed Christ, would last to the end of the world, and the powers of the Unseen World should not prevail against it. This faith in

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Christ would open the gate of heaven, and what the company of believers determined to be right or wrong would be acknowledged in heaven. For the moment this first confessor was the Church. As the others believed and confessed, the same things were said to them as to Peter (Matt. xviii. 18).

The early Fathers understood what was meant. Origen says that the promise was made, not to Peter alone, but to every disciple who joins in Peter's confession. Chrysostom held that the Rock was not Peter, but the faith of his confession. St. Jerome says that the Rock was Christ, and with him St. Augustine at last agreed.

Hundreds of years after, the Church of Rome declared that Peter was the Rock on which the Church was built, and that the Popes are the successors of Peter. This fiction has worked terrible evil in the world. It has been the cause of the decline of the Western Church.

But the confession was at last made. Peter, leading the little group of the selected apostles, confesses that Jesus is Christ, the Son of the living God, and the Church of Christ begins to take shape. They who believe and confess Christ are the Church; all down the ages the growing company of believers will be protected from the powers of Hades, and what

they do and say will be ratified in the heavenly world. Christ has opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers. All who believe begin at once to live the life that lasts for ever.

Still Jesus told the Twelve not to announce as yet that he was the Christ. Much had to be done and suffered before that should come.

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CHAPTER XX

PREPARING TO DIE

DIRECTLY the apostles had confessed that Jesus was the Son of God, he began to break to them the news that he would soon die in a certain way and for a certain purpose. It was a hard lesson for him to teach and for them to learn; he must go up to Jerusalem to suffer much, to be rejected by the elders and the high priests and the Scribes, and to be killed and, after three days, to rise again. This he told them quite plainly.

Peter, in his impetuous way, broke in: "Mercy on thee, Lord! it shall not be." Peter at present could not understand that Jesus might save the world by dying for it. Jesus himself looked on the death that was coming with unspeakable dread. There was always a strong, tempting voice urging him to avoid it. And Peter's rejection of the thought chimed in with his own instinctive shrinking from death of the kind which awaited him. He saw in Peter again that tempter whom he had resisted

and silenced for a time at the beginning. He turned to him and said: "Get behind me, Satan; your thought is not divine, but human."

These men who had confessed that he was Messiah and the Son of God were for that reason sure that he would not suffer or die. The Messiah was to conquer and to reign: the Son of the living God must himself live. It now became the chief thought of the Master to change the thought of his apostles on this point, to give them the thought which was not human, but divine, the thought that the way of death was the way of life, that the way of the cross was the way of the light, and that, as the Lamb of God that should take away the sin of the world, he must be a Lamb that was slain.

With this he joined another lesson which was almost as difficult to learn: if they were to be his disciples, they also must deny themselves, take up their crosses, and follow him. He began to stir within them the heroic spirit, to make that great demand which draws men to him more than the promise of thrones and of palms. He would die for them: but what should they do for him?

"Whoever wills to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for the sake of me and the gospel, shall save it. For what good is

it for a man to gain the whole world and lose himself? For what should a man give in exchange for himself? For whoever shall be ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels."

Thus these men learnt that they must be ready to give up everything, even life itself, for their Master and for his message to the world. Thus they learnt that the death which was drawing near would not be the end, but that afterwards there would be a glorious coming. If it was a terrible disappointment to learn that their Lord should die a shameful death, they plucked up heart to hear of the glory that should follow.

And then he said some words full of hope and wonder: "Verily I say unto you, that there are some of those standing here who shall not taste of death until they see the kingdom of God come in power."

Some of those standing around him that day lived to see the outpouring of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, and the preaching of the gospel all through the Roman Empire. The confession of his Divine Sonship which they had just made would be like the leaven in the dough; it would surely reach and change the whole world.

But as they now believed, and the new day was breaking, it was possible for the more advanced scholars in this school to see something at once which would be the promise of that coming kingdom. It was the month of August. Rising in full view of Cæsarea Philippi was the snow-clad mass of Mount Hermon, more than 10,000 feet high. About a week after the great confession, Jesus proposed to Peter and John and James that they should climb the mountain to pray. The nine other disciples were left in the town, and the four set off for their climb, a distance of eight or nine miles. When they had reached a lonely spur of the mountain, they began to pray. And as Jesus prayed, a very remarkable thing happened. The three friends saw his face change, as if the soul shone through the body; the light soon became like the sun. Meanwhile his clothes became so dazzling that no one could think they had been made so by earthly means. They seemed like light itself. While the three looked on in amazement they saw two men talking with their transfigured Master, Moses and Elijah, and they heard a conversation going on between them. They were talking about the exodus of Jesus. Jesus was soon to go out of this world of time and place at Jerusalem. That exodus would be his glory. And Moses,

the prophet who had been caught up to God from Mount Nebo, and Elijah, the prophet who had been swept to heaven in a chariot of fire, were speaking to Jesus about his own mode of returning to God. It would be different from theirs. It would seem like shame, but it would be glory. His death of agony and terror would be the salvation of the world. This wonderful vision came to the three apostles as they slept. When they woke they just saw the forms of Moses and Elijah parting from their Master.

Peter, eager to speak, and hardly knowing what he said, cried out: "Master, let us make three booths, one for you, one for Moses, one for Elijah. It is good to stay here." But as he spoke a cloud came down over the mountain, and the three feared as it covered them. Then they heard the voice out of the cloud which had been heard at the baptism: "This is My chosen Son; hear him." That was all. When the cloud lifted, there was Jesus alone, looking as usual.

This vision had a great effect on the three. It prepared them for the death of Jesus which was coming, and showed them beforehand the body of his resurrection. It made them sure that he was what they had confessed him to be, the Son of the living God. Next morning they

were full of solemn thought and eager questioning. They began to climb down the mountain again. Jesus startled them by this amazing remark: "Do not mention the vision of last night until the Son of Man is risen from the dead." "Risen from the dead!" they said, "what can that mean?" Jesus was training these slow but honest minds to receive the truth, not only of the Cross, but of the Resurrection. Then one of them, with the vision of Elijah in his mind, asked him the meaning of the coming of Elijah, foretold by Malachi, and expected by the Scribes. And Jesus explained to them that the coming of Elijah was not the vision of the past night, but the ministry of John the Baptizer, who had been beheaded; and so he himself was going to suffer!

In this talk, full of deep and awful interest, the hours passed, and now they were back on the plain. Here they came upon a scene of great excitement. A crowd had come to meet them, and a man ran up to Jesus and knelt before him. There was something in the face of Jesus which filled all who saw him with astonishment, and brought this man to his knees. "What is the matter?" asked Jesus. "Have mercy on me," cried the man. "My son is a lunatic and in a terrible condition; he often falls into the fire or the water; when the

fit comes on he foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth, and tears himself. I asked your disciples to heal him, and they could not."

There were nine disciples who, in the absence of Jesus, should have been doing his work, but they could not! The Master turned to them and said: "O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you, how long shall I bear with you? Bring him to me." The boy was brought. A fit came on, and he rolled foaming in the dust. "How long has he suffered like this?" asked Jesus. "From childhood," said the father. "Oh, if you can, help us, pity us." Jesus answered calmly: "If you can! All things are possible to one who believes." Immediately the father cried out: "I believe: help my unbelief."

The crowd was getting more and more excited, and pressing round. Jesus therefore spoke the word bidding the deaf and dumb spirit come out and enter the boy no more. With a cry and convulsions the boy fell flat and lay as if he were dead. But Jesus took him by the hand and raised him up.

When they reached the house, the nine disciples who had been so helpless asked Jesus why they could not cast out that evil spirit. He told them it was because their faith was so little, and they did not pray enough. These

terrible diseases could only be cured by long and earnest prayer.

The time had now come for returning from Cæsarea Philippi, where these great things had happened. On their journey back to Capernaum Jesus talked much about the treachery which would deliver him to his enemies, and about his coming death and resurrection. The Twelve were awed into silence, and dared not ask him for any particulars. Indeed, they fell back and talked among themselves. And what do you think was the subject of their talk? They were not asking : Which of us will prove the traitor? but, Which of us shall be the greatest? It is a sad picture : Jesus setting off to face death for them and for all men, they disputing for the first place in the apostolic company. None of them understood Jesus to mean that Peter was appointed to the first place, neither did he himself.

When at last they reached Capernaum, the collector of the temple-tax came to Peter and said : "Does not your Teacher pay the half-shekel?" For every Israelite paid in the spring one shilling and threepence towards the upkeep of the temple. Jesus always paid it, as a good Jew. But he had been away for many weeks. When Peter came into the house, Jesus at once said : "Do kings take taxes from their

sons, or from strangers?" "From strangers," said Peter. "Then the sons are free," said Jesus. He was the Son of God, whose temple was maintained by the tax; and therefore, in a spiritual sense, he was not bound to pay. "But," he added, "that we may not throw a stumbling-block in their way, we will pay the stater (*i. e.* two-and-sixpence) for us both." But how? thought Peter; for they had returned from the long journey with an empty purse. "There is the fishing," said the Master; before this a pearl, or a ring, or a coin has been found in a fish's maw. Peter understood the wisdom and the wit of the suggestion, and by his take of fish paid the tax.

We now have a beautiful piece of the training of the Twelve, given in Peter's house at Capernaum. They all gathered about him, and he shamed them by asking what they had been talking about on the journey. He knew. There was a child in the house—Peter's. Jesus took the child in his arms, and, holding him there in the midst, he said: "You must be like this child, who does not seek to be first; the greatest in the kingdom of God is the humblest. The childlike, the humble, the weak, have their angels before the throne of God. Be such yourselves, and take care how you put a stumbling-block in the way of such; better have a

millstone around your neck and be cast into the sea than commit that offence."

Now on the road they had met a man casting out devils in the name of Jesus, and John said they had tried to stop him. "You shouldn't," said Jesus. "He might be only a babe in the kingdom, but you should encourage and not hinder him. You must learn to deal kindly and forgivingly with men. Try to be reconciled; only bring the offender to the synagogue when private means have failed. Always act in prayer; whenever two agree to pray, my Father in heaven will grant your request. Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

It was all very new and wonderful to them. "How often must I forgive my brother?" broke in Peter. "Seven times?" The Scribes said, Three times. But Peter felt he must go farther than that. "You must forgive him seventy times seven"—that is, always, yes, always. Then Jesus told this beautiful story: "A king had a subject who owed him £2,000,000; and when he did not pay, the king ordered him to be sold up. But he fell at his feet and said: 'Have patience, and I will pay.' Then the king forgave him the debt. But that slave went out and seized a fellow-slave by the throat who owed him three pounds ten, and in

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spite of his plea for patience, threw him into prison. When the king heard what was done, he sent for him and said: 'Wicked slave, I forgave you; you ought to have forgiven your fellow-slave.' Then he delivered him to the torturers until he should repay the £2,000,000."

"So also," added Jesus, "will my heavenly Father do to you, if you do not each of you forgive your brother from your heart."

Thus he trained his disciples as he moved towards his Cross.

CHAPTER XXI

SETTING OUT FOR JERUSALEM

THE days in Galilee were drawing to a close. Jesus had nearly done all that he could do by living, and he had to face his greatest deed—dying. His training of the Twelve was as far advanced as their capacity allowed. They had to learn the rest by the experience of his death. From now to the end he was preparing them for what would have to be done after that event. First of all he had to prepare them for the fact that their mission would not, like his own, be confined to Israel. This he did by a kind of parable in act. As there were twelve tribes of Israel, so, the Jews thought, there were seventy nations of mankind; as, therefore, he had first chosen twelve apostles, he now chose from the crowd of believers who had gathered round him in Galilee seventy, and sent them in pairs to every place which he was going to visit before he reached Jerusalem. To show that he meant by this that his followers were to go to all nations and all men, he told them that

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the harvest was great, but the labourers were few, and they must pray to the Lord of the harvest to urge on more labourers to enter the harvest-work. Seventy were a good number for Galilee, but what were they for all the world?

To the Seventy he gave almost the same directions as he had given to the Twelve (Luke x. 1-11). We cannot follow this missionary band in their work; we only know that they were successful, and found even the devils subject to them by the name of Jesus. Their success gave Jesus a moment of exquisite joy. He saw Satan falling from heaven. He rejoiced that the truth of the heavenly kingdom was shown to babes. He declared that he knew the Father and the Father knew him, and that he could show the Father to men. Then, in a great outburst of joy and love, he said the words which are still in the ears of the weary world: "Come to me, all who are weary and laden, and I will rest you. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you shall find rest to your souls; for my yoke is gracious and my burden is light" (Matt. xi. 28-30). That was a word spoken to all mankind. It sounds clear and strong across the ages, and will for ever sound.

But he was going to leave the towns around

the lake for ever, Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum. These towns had not understood him, nor repented. They would be judged by the greatness of their opportunity and privilege; their punishment would be worse than that of Tyre and Sidon, or Sodom and Gomorrah. It is wonderful to-day to see those shores of the lake a solitude and not to be able to say where those towns stood.

Two or three things, however, happened before he left the familiar scenes, which give us a glimpse into his mind. One day a man came and asked him to speak to his brother, to divide his father's property with him. "No," said Jesus, "that is not my work!" And this led him to warn the people against the love of money—Mammon, as it was called. He told them of a man who had become rich and meant to live at his ease, and in a moment he died. Then, turning to his disciples, he taught them not to be anxious about earthly things, food and clothing. He pointed to the birds and showed how God feeds and clothes them, and to the flowers, and showed how beautifully they clothe the fields. Would not God their Father feed and clothe them? "Fear not, little flock," he said, "because it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Freely part with

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your money; your treasure is in heaven, where moth and rust do not corrupt, and thieves do not break in and steal."

Another day news came that some Galileans who had gone up to Jerusalem with their offering had been slaughtered near the temple by Pilate. Another painful incident was reported. A tower had fallen at Siloam and killed eighteen persons. People thought these accidents were punishments for sin. "No," said Jesus, "these accidents have no connection with sin; they only serve to remind us that we must all die, and we must therefore be ready by repentance towards God." Then, thinking of the cities in which he had been working with no visible result for three years or so, he told of a fig-tree in a vineyard which was without fruit for three years, and the owner wanted to cut it down; but his man said: "Give me another year to dig about it and manure it, and see if it will bear; if it will not, you shall cut it down." The sands were running out, but Capernaum might yet repent. Certainly Jesus himself was unchanged up to his last day in Galilee.

One sabbath in the synagogue there was a woman doubled up, unable to stand straight, and so she had been for eighteen years. Jesus felt sympathy, and spoke his strong word, that

she was released from her weakness, at the same time laying his hands on her. She was able to stand up at once, and began to praise God. The chief of the synagogue was deeply grieved at the breaking of the sabbath. But Jesus addressed the people and showed how they fed their ox or ass on the sabbath, and it was still more right to heal a "daughter of Abraham" who had been ill so long.

Thus for the last time in the familiar scene he tried to show them that their reverence for the sabbath had become inhuman, and therefore ungodly.

It was now October, and every one was going up to Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles. His brothers came from Nazareth and asked him to go up with them, to show the authorities there his work. His brothers did not believe in him. But Jesus, though he was leaving Capernaum, did not mean to be in Jerusalem until the Feast of the Passover, which would be in the following April. He knew that he was going to be offered as the Paschal Lamb for the world. It was not time for him, therefore, to go up yet. He bade them go, because it was always time for them (John vii. 1-9). When they had gone he set out with the Twelve, saying good-bye to Capernaum for

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ever, intending to occupy the six months in a final tour through Galilee, Samaria, and the Jordan valley, visiting the places to which the Seventy had gone, and to arrive in Jerusalem for 'he Passover. We can follow him, though not in detail, for St. Luke has given us some incidents and much that he said on this long tour.

At one place on the way through Galilee some one asked: "Are the saved few?" Jesus would not answer this. There are two Ways, he said! One is broad and easy; the other is narrow, with a narrow door of entrance. Agonize to enter that narrow way. For the time quickly comes when it is no longer possible. The feast of God is spread; at the right time the door is shut, and then no knocking will avail. To that feast men will come from all parts of the world, and the favoured Israelites who missed their opportunity will be shut out. At this point some Pharisees, irritated with the thought of Gentiles coming into the heavenly kingdom, said: "You had better leave these parts, for Herod means to kill you." Jesus was leaving these parts, and going up to Jerusalem to die. He was on his way; but he would not be hurried for fear of Herod. "Go and tell this vixen," he said, "that I cast out devils and

heal for to-day and to-morrow; the third day I am done; not here, however: Jerusalem is the place in which the prophets of God are slain!"

The thought of Jerusalem always almost broke his heart (Luke xiii. 34, 35 - Matt. xxiii. 37-39). He was not far from Tiberias, where was Herod's palace. One of the Pharisees, perhaps struck by his courage and confidence, asked him to dinner. It was a sabbath, a day often used for festal gatherings, though the food was cooked the day before. The conversation at the dinner-table is recorded by Luke (xiv. 1-24). A dropsical man pressed into the room, and Jesus healed him, saying that if a son, or even an ox, of theirs fell into the well on the sabbath they would pull him out. Might he not save this man who was dying from dropsy? Then he told them to take the lowest places at a feast, that the host might bid them go up higher. Then he bade his host ask not the rich, but the poor, who could not repay him. Some one at the table remarked: "Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God!" "No doubt," said Jesus, "but who would they be at that feast? God is inviting you all to it, but you are too occupied, you make excuses. He will gather in the people

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from the streets and the slums, from the highways and the hedgerows."

The idea that most men were refusing his great offer of the kingdom of God was strong in his mind at this time. Men would not come to him for rest and life and joy.

When he went on his journey a crowd followed him as usual—he could not be hid. But he longed to sift and to find those who were genuine. He turned to them and said that to be his disciple a man must hate all else, relatives, friends, his own life. Certainly Jesus did not hide the difficulties. They must count the cost. He wanted those who would be a salt in the earth. They must be wholehearted, given up entirely to him.

Shortly after he was at table with a number of publicans and sinners, and as usual the Pharisees grumbled at the company he kept. This led him to tell the exquisite stories of the shepherd who lost one sheep and found it, of the woman who lost one coin and found it, and of the father who lost his son and found him. No art can make these stories better or more wonderful than they are. You must read them in Luke xv. Thus he showed that while he could not welcome the thoughtless crowd, he was always eager to welcome the repentant sinner.

The contrast between the Pharisees and the poor led him to speak further about money. He told his disciples of a shrewd steward who curried favour with the creditors of his master by letting them off some of the blackmail which he had wrung from them. How much wiser worldly people are than the religious! Money should be used to make people your friends, so that in the heavenly kingdom they will receive you with a welcome. "Show yourselves approved bankers" was a saying attributed to Jesus. The Pharisees were bad bankers: they used their money for themselves, and took no notice of the needs of the poor. This was the worst possible investment of money. And then he showed by a story what he meant. There was a rich man living in luxury; and a poor diseased man at his door, attended to only by the dogs of the town. They both died. In the other world, where, as Greeks and Jews thought, all souls go at death, there were two places, one called Tartarus, the other Elysium, or, as the Jews would say, Paradise, or Abraham's bosom. The two souls entered Hades; the rich man was in Tartarus, and the poor one in Abraham's bosom. In his torment the rich man wanted the poor one to come to him; but there was, not a thin line, as the Rabbis said, but a great gulf

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between them. Then the rich man wanted Lazarus to go and warn his brothers. But he was told that that would be of no use : they had the writings of Moses and the Prophets ; they would not listen to a ghost if they do not listen to them. This rich man had been a bad banker !

Thus Jesus taught men how to use money, with their eyes on the future world.

CHAPTER XXII

THROUGH SAMARIA TO JERUSALEM

JESUS now came to the borderland between Galilee and Jerusalem; and we cannot help thinking that he intended to linger in Samaria and work among its people for the six months between the Feast of Tabernacles and the Passover, when he meant to arrive in Jerusalem. When he first sent out the Twelve in pairs he told them not to go into any city of the Samaritans; their first missionary tour was confined to Galilee, but he always remembered the gracious time he had enjoyed in Samaria on that first return from Jerusalem to Nazareth, when the woman of Sychar had learnt that he was Messiah.

The Samaritan country was a strip between Galilee and Jerusalem, and the road to the Holy City lay through it; the way on the other side of the Jordan was, then as now, more difficult and dangerous. With his face set towards Jerusalem, then, but meaning to move slowly from village to village with his glad news and works of mercy, Jesus entered

Samaria. One of the first places on the road was Ginæa, a pretty little town, from whose bordering ridge the eye ranges over the plain of Esdraelon, and sees in the distance the white houses of Nazareth on the hill. It may have been as he entered this place with his little group of apostles that he saw the too-familiar sight of lepers by the wayside; there were ten of these mutilated and disfigured outcasts, who had heard that the Master from Galilee had healed people as bad as themselves. Only one of the ten was a Samaritan; the rest were orthodox Jews. But their common misery drew them together. As lepers they were one, though as Jews and Samaritans they would have been bitterly hostile. "Master, have mercy on us," they cried. Jesus answered: "Go and show yourselves to the priests" (see Luke v. 14). This was the Law: the priests were to examine lepers, and to pronounce them unclean or clean (Lev. xiii. 1, etc.; and xiv. 2, 3). The poor sufferers obeyed; and as they set off they were healed! Strange to say, the nine Jews forgot the Healer, and went to the priests to be pronounced clean. But the Samaritan broke into a loud cry of joy, and, thanking God, came back to fall at the feet of Jesus, who had healed him. The piety of "this

stranger" warmed the heart of Jesus. It looked as if he was going to have another harvest in Samaria, such as he could not get among orthodox Jews. "Arise and go," he said, "thy faith has saved thee!"

In the town were some Pharisees, perhaps on their way to Jerusalem for the feast. They were irritated by praise given to a Samaritan, and, looking at the insignificant group of the disciples, they asked Jesus when the kingdom of which he was always talking would come. He made the astonishing reply: "It is here; it is among you." Wherever Jesus is, the kingdom is. The little band were almost as disappointed and puzzled as the Pharisees were; for they wanted a kingdom that comes with pomp and power for every one to see. He therefore gave them a parable to encourage them to pray; they were his elect, and they would be vindicated if only they continued to plead with God. This was the story, taken from life: There was a judge, godless and reckless, in a certain town. A widow came and asked him for justice against one who had wronged her. He took no notice. But then he said in his coarse and brutal way: "I don't care for God or man, but this woman is a nuisance; I will do her justice, or she will black my

eyes!" If a bad, earthly judge does justice for such a reason, asks Jesus, will not God, the good, the holy, the merciful Judge, do justice to His elect who cry to Him day and night, though the delay sometimes seems long? He will indeed. And yet, he asked sadly, when He came, would he find faith on earth?

Then, turning to the Pharisees, self-righteous, and scornful to his humble followers gathered from tax-gatherers and other sinners, he drew a picture of what would happen at Jerusalem in the temple. A Pharisee and a despised tax-gatherer are praying. He reads the prayer in each heart. The Pharisee thanks God he is not bad, or even like this tax-gatherer. He fasts twice a week, and the tenth part of all his goods, even down to the smallest herbs, given to God, make him feel very righteous. The tax-gatherer, standing far behind, eyes downcast, beating his breast, only says: "God be merciful to me the sinner!" It was the tax-gatherer, and not the Pharisee, who went home justified.

But now a severe disappointment was in store for Jesus. The gratitude of the healed Samaritan leper was like a fine dawn which precedes a stormy day. Coming to another village on his journey, though two of the Seventy had been

there before him to prepare his way, he was refused admittance. 1. The people thought he was going up to Jerusalem—that was enough: the Samaritans would have nothing to do with Jews! The Twelve, exalted by the encouragement he had just given them, were indignant. Remembering how Elijah had called fire from heaven to burn up the companies of fifty soldiers (2 Kings i. 12), James and John asked if they should do the same for this inhospitable village. Then Jesus said the wonderful words, which are only preserved in a few of the MSS.: "You know not what Spirit you are of, for the Son of Man came not to destroy, but to save men's lives."

Jesus showed no anger, but went on to the next village. The Seventy had evidently not made a good impression in Samaria, and it would be useless to linger in the hostile country. At some place appointed the Seventy messengers now reassembled. They were well pleased with themselves. They had effected many cures, though they had not succeeded in teaching. Jesus recognized the measure of good that had been done. "I saw Satan as lightning fall from heaven," he said. He had given power to his servants to tread unharmed on snakes and scorpions, and on all the power

of the enemy. But he did not want them to rejoice in the exercise of miraculous powers: he rather wished them to be glad that they were his, assured of a heavenly home with him.

Reluctantly Jesus left Samaria and came near to Jerusalem. He stopped most likely at Jericho. His mind was full of sympathy with the Samaritans as he left them. And now, in the synagogue it would seem, a Scribe, well versed in the Law, took him to task, intending to show him up to the people. "Teacher," he asked, "what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus turned the question on him: "In the Law what is written? How do you read it?" The lawyer gave a stock answer, a summary of the Law according to the best Rabbis: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy understanding, and thy neighbour as thyself." Jesus accepted this summary of the Law (Deut. vi. 5; Lev. xix. 18, and xviii. 5). "This do and you shall live," he said. Here was nothing to lay hold of. The lawyer therefore tried again; he thought he might show that Jesus was not orthodox. "Who is my neighbour?" he asked. The Rabbis all answered the question: "Your fellow-Jew." This was the answer of Jesus: "A man was

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coming down the steep road from Jerusalem to Jericho, along the 'Road of Blood,' that scene of countless robberies and murders. In one of the dangerous towns of the way robbers fell upon him, beat him, stripped him, and left him half dead. By chance a priest passed by (for the priests lived in large numbers at Jericho when they were not fulfilling their course in the temple). He took no notice. Then came a Levite, who looked at the helpless man and passed on. But a Samaritan travelling on the road saw him and was filled with pity. He dismounted from his ass, attended to the wounds, lifted him into the saddle, and took him to the inn, where he was well known. Next day he gave the landlord two days' pay, and said: 'Take care of this helpless man; if it costs more I will pay you on my way back.' Which do you think was neighbour to the man who fell among the thieves?" asked Jesus. The lawyer could not bring himself to say the hated word, the Samaritan. He said: "He that showed mercy on him." "Go and do likewise," said Jesus.

By the rejection in Samaria Jesus had arrived in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem before the joyful Feast of Tabernacles was over. "He who has not seen its joy knows not what joy

is," the Rabbis were accustomed to say. It was the feast of the exodus from Egypt, and also the feast of the harvest. In the mellow autumn days for a whole week the people lived in pleasant booths made of boughs and leaves on the housetops, to remind them of the journey in tents from Egypt to their own land of Canaan. At this feast people sent "portions" to one another, and made good cheer (Neh. viii. 9-18). Jesus now, ascending to Jerusalem by that "Road of Blood," came to Bethany, the little town on the shoulder of the Mount of Olives just before the city came in sight. Here he had an unexpected welcome. According to custom, the people of the village received strangers who arrived at the inn in turn. A woman named Martha came and asked him to the house where she lived with her brother Lazarus and her sister Mary. When he came to the house, he found that Mary was that woman from Magdala on the Galilean lake whose devoted love he had won by healing and restoring her. So soon as he sat down she placed herself at his feet to listen in reverence and devotion to all that he said. The hostess meanwhile busied herself with preparing the "portions" for the household and for friends. Suddenly the busy woman broke in: "Sir, is

it nothing to you that my sister leaves all the work to me? Tell her to help me." The answer of Jesus was full of meaning: "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things; but there is need only of few things, or of one. The 'portion' Mary has chosen is the good one which shall not be taken from her."

The one thing needful is to hear and learn from Jesus—to sit always at his feet! Among the people, and especially among the Scribes and the priests, there was much inquiry whether Jesus would come to the Feast of Tabernacles. Eighteen months had elapsed since he had created a stir in Jerusalem by healing the helpless man at the pool of Bethesda. "Where is that fellow?" asked the authorities (John vii. 12), whose agents had been dogging his steps all the time in Galilee. The people, on the other hand, were divided: some thought him good, others a deceiver. It was now the fourth day of the feast. Each day seventy bullocks were offered in sacrifice in the temple, for the seventy nations of the world, said the Rabbis. On this day Jesus came in from Bethany and began to teach in the temple court. His teaching astonished the Scribes, for he had never been at college, the House of the Midrash, as it was

called. But they were set on killing him, because he had healed a man on the sabbath day. Among the people, on the other hand, there were many whispers: "When Messiah comes will he do more signs than he does?" The Pharisees sent their servants with orders to arrest him.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE FOUNTAIN OF WATERS; THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD; THE GOOD SHEPHERD

THE time of Jesus had now come; it was sooner than he expected by six months, but he was led by the will of the Father, and had come up to Jerusalem for this glad Feast of Tabernacles. He knew that he must now declare in this city, which was the centre of the Jewish religion, and in the holy temple, which was the most sacred spot on earth, the truth about himself, that he was the Messiah whom the Jews expected, and that as the Messiah—or Christ—of the Jews, he was the Saviour of the world. Sad to say, the leaders of the Jewish religion were set against believing him; their officers were ordered to arrest him; and they themselves met him and talked with him, only to trap him into sayings which might condemn him. They were resolved to destroy him.

After seven days of the joyous feast, there was an eighth day, on which only one bullock was offered, for Israel alone. This was con-

sidered "the great day of the feast." On this day Jesus made in the temple his great declaration. Two days before at sunrise, according to custom, a priest had brought a pitcher of water from the Pool of Siloam, through the Water Gate, and amid a blare of trumpets had poured the water into the silver basin between the altar of burnt-offering and the temple-door. It was a thanksgiving and prayer for the water which made the land fruitful. All through the seven days the people prayed for dew. But on the eighth they prayed for rain.

Now on this eighth day Jesus stood in the temple court and in a loud voice said: "If any one thirsts let him come unto me and drink. He that believes on me, as the Scripture said, rivers shall flow out of his body—living water." It was an invitation which the apostles afterwards understood. Whoever believed on him would receive the Holy Spirit, and whoever received the Holy Spirit would be like a fountain which pours out life-giving waters. Then Jesus called all the people who were weary and heavy laden to come to him, and he would give them rest. Instead of the "yoke of the Law," which had been crushing them, he would give them his yoke, his burden, a yoke which he put on his own neck and theirs. It would be light

indeed and easy compared with the religion of the temple, and the burdens bound upon them by the Scribes and the priests. To believe on him was a simple thing, and yet that faith would do all that the Law promised to do, and far more. "Come unto me—I am meek and lowly in heart—you shall find rest unto your souls!" This was the new religion, proclaimed in the innermost shrine of the old. The old had been only a type or a figure of the new.

This great announcement produced a great sensation all through the temple courts, and the crowds that thronged the city for the feast. Some said: "This is truly the Prophet"—*i. e.* the prophet that was expected to come before the Messiah. Others said: "This is the Messiah." But to this amazing confession the legalists objected, that the Messiah would not come from Galilee, but "of the seed of David, and from Bethlehem, his city." So said the Scriptures (Micah v. 2; Ps. lxxxix. 3). They did not know that their very objection was really a proof, for Jesus had come of David's seed, and had, as we saw, been born in Bethlehem.

The officers who had been sent to arrest him were as much impressed as every one else by the great announcement and invitation. They returned to the Sanhedrin, where the high priests and Pharisees were expecting them.

"Why have you not brought him?" asked the Court. "Never did a man speak as this man speaks," they said. These great men were very uneasy and liable to lose their temper. They turned even on their own officers and said: "Are you, too, deceived? Has any of the rulers believed on him, or of the Pharisees? As for the people, who know not the Law, they are cursed!" This outbreak of temper, showing an uneasy conscience, did not prevent one of themselves from making a protest. Nicodemus, who came to Jesus by night three years before, said: "Does the Law condemn any one without a hearing?" In his heart he believed on Jesus himself. What he said was very simple. But his fellow-rulers in their anger asked him: "Are you a supporter of Galilee? search and see that out of Galilee no prophet arises!" Their passion carried them away. Jonah, for example, came out of Galilee, and his tomb is still to be seen there, not far from Nazareth. And out of Galilee of the nations, this Prophet, greater than all prophets, had come. Here the matter ended for the time. The crowd were so impressed by Jesus that the rulers did not venture to proceed further: they were desperately afraid of the people.

The feast was now over and the multitude left Jerusalem, but Jesus remained, and for

many weeks appeared in the temple, facing rulers and people with his clear declaration that he was Messiah, and with the evidences of his claim in the words he spoke and in the works he did. The proud and self-righteous Jews listened to him, talked to him, and from time to time, in their fanatical temper, showed that they were bent on killing him. John has preserved several episodes of this stern hand-to-hand fight, in which the Messiah was putting it beyond all dispute who he was.

One day he made the startling announcement: "I am the Light of the world; he that follows me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life." One of the names given by these Scribes and Pharisees to the expected Messiah was "The Light." But now, in their blindness and prejudice, they objected that Jesus was only bearing witness of himself, and could not be believed. Jesus, with quiet dignity, said: "I know who I am, and whence I came. Who can bear witness of me except the Father? He bears witness in my own heart, and I tell you what I know." This occurred in the Court of the Women, where the trumpet-shaped boxes stood to receive the offerings of the people. It was so convincing that every one was silenced.

Another time he told these bitter and angry

men that he would soon leave them and return to the upper world from which he came, and they would die in their sins because they would not believe who he was. "Who are you?" they said in defiant scorn. "Oh, that I speak to you at all!" he exclaimed. "He who sent me bids me say what I do to the world." He meant his Father. Then he added: "When you have lifted up the Son of Man you shall know this." Again his words were so convincing that many believed on him. Others were present who did not go so far as to believe on him, but yet believed for a moment what he said; to those he immediately said something which showed that their belief was not rootèd: "If you *abide* in my word, you shall come to know the truth and the truth shall make you free." Their temper flared up; as descendants of Abraham they considered themselves free. "Ah," said Jesus, with gentle earnestness, "I meant freedom from sin: a slave of sin cannot remain in the Father's house, only the Son. If the Son makes you free you shall be free indeed." Their faces were now angry, and looked as if they would have killed him, so slight had been their faith. "If you had been true children of Abraham you would not wish to kill me because I tell you the truth, which I hear from God. The devil is the murderer from

the beginning; he is your father rather than Abraham."

Those proud faces now became mad with passion: "You are a Samaritan," they cried; they could not forgive that parable of the Good Samaritan; "you have a devil." "No," said Jesus calmly, as if he were thinking alone, "I am honouring my Father, and he who keeps the word I am preaching shall never die!" The angry men caught the words: "This proves you have a devil. Abraham died, and the prophets. You say if a man hear *you*, he shall not die. Who are *you*, indeed?" "Not myself," said Jesus; "it is not myself that I am thinking of as me. But I must speak the truth of my Father, or be untrue, as you are. Your father, as you call him, Abraham, rejoiced to see me!" "Abraham!" they exclaimed. "You are not yet fifty—seen Abraham!" "I solemnly assure you that I am, before Abraham existed."

The "I am" was the name by which God made himself known to Moses (Exod. vi. 2). Jesus could not have more distinctly stated that he was God.

In their fury these Jews took up stones to stone him; but he slipped away. The wrathful rulers, after this distinct assertion of Jesus that he was Messiah, and that he was the Son of God, decreed that whoever confessed him to

be what he claimed to be should be excommunicated from the synagogue, the most awful punishment that could happen to a Jew at that time.

Some time later, among the sufferers who crowded about the temple, seeking restoration or alms, Jesus saw a young man who had been born blind. As the Light of the world he was prompted to give light to these blind eyes. Clay and spittle as an unguent was, in the medical practice of the time, used for sore eyes. Jesus gave this treatment to the poor man and bade him go and wash in the Pool of Siloam. His sight came to him for the first time. Every one was amazed, and asked him how it happened. "The man called Jesus did it," he said. "Where is the fellow?" said the bigots. They remembered that it had been the sabbath when the cure was effected, and they brought the young man to the Pharisees, who were sure that Jesus could not be from God because he had broken the sabbath; and now if the healed man confessed Jesus, they would excommunicate him. Unfortunately, their inquiries from the parents of the young man proved certainly that he, born blind, had received his sight from Jesus. But they did not care about the cure. "Give glory to God," they said to the man; "we assure you that this man is a sinner." This

was too much for the grateful fellow, who knew that Jesus had given him his sight. When the baffled Pharisees asked him to tell them again how it all happened, he said: "Do you want to hear it again? Do you want to be his disciples?" Then they jeered at him. "You are the disciple of that fellow; but we are the disciples of Moses; we know that God has spoken to Moses; but we don't know where this man comes from."

They did, and the young man knew that they did. He could not keep silence, and to these august but angry teachers of the people, he declared that this deed of love and wonder showed who Jesus was.

Angry and beaten, they consoled themselves by excommunicating the young man. Jesus heard of this and found him out, and asked him if he believed in the Son of Man. "Who is he, lord, that I may believe on him?" "With your new-won sight you see him." "I believe, Lord," and he worshipped Jesus.

And then to encourage this excommunicated man, Jesus said in his exquisite way: "In a sheepfold on the hills the doorkeeper admits the shepherd, who enters and leads the sheep out to the pasture and back again, for they know his voice. Thieves and robbers get over the wall."

Those rulers who had cast the blind man out were the thieves and robbers. Jesus was the true shepherd, and this man knew his voice.

"Yes," he went on, "I am not only the Shepherd, but the door; through me you enter the fold and find the pasture. The thieves destroy. I came to save. Like a good shepherd, I am going to die for the sheep. My Father loves me because I have come to lay down my life, and to take it again, for the sheep, these and the others whom I shall bring."

Thus to the excommunicated man, and to all who stood by, the Messiah showed what his coming death would do.

The hearers were divided. The bigots said: "This shows he has a devil, and is mad; why do you listen to him?" But others felt that these deep and tender words were not those of a demoniac. Besides, there was the fact, that he had opened the eyes of one who was born blind.

CHAPTER XXIV

HOW THE APOSTLES WERE IRRITATED

JESUS had now been in Jerusalem three months. It was December 25, when the Eight Days' Feast began, which was held in memory of the dedication of the temple by Judas Maccabæus, after its desecration by Antiochus Epiphanes. This you may read in 1 Macc. iv. 52-59. He was walking in that portico of the temple which had escaped the destruction in 585 B.C., and was called after Solomon, the builder of the first temple. The Jewish authorities came up to him and asked him to tell them plainly if he was the Messiah. He put the question beyond doubt. Though he knew that *they* would not believe, nor would be his sheep, he pointed to all that he had been doing as proof of the fact, which he put in this way : "I and my Father, we are one."

They saw what he meant : that, being a man, he made himself God. This they would not believe. In their rage they picked up stones again, which were there for the repair of the

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temple, and were about to stone him to death. But he arrested them by another appeal to his works. For which of these loving and saving works did they mean to stone him? "Oh, not for those," they said angrily, "but for the blasphemy!" Then, with a gentle patience, he tried to soften their prejudice by quoting Ps. lxxxii. 6: "I said ye are gods, and all of you sons of the Most High." God and man were not so far apart as they supposed. If that could be said of those to whom God's word came, surely they might believe that one sent into the world on the saving errand could say "I am the Son of God." Let them judge by his works. If these works were not evidence, he did not ask them to believe; but if they were, it might be clearly known that, as he put it, "In me is the Father, and I in the Father."

But they would not listen to his sweet reasonableness, and tried again to seize him.

It was now evident to him, and to his friends, that his life was in danger, and if he stayed in Jerusalem the priests and Pharisees would make away with him. But he had settled it in his mind that the offering of his life, which was always in view, should be at the Passover, because he would be the Paschal Lamb. He determined, therefore, to leave the city for those three months. As he passed over the Mount

of Olives, he looked back on the three months that he had spent there, and forward three months to the Passover, and said: "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent to thee, how often I wished to gather thy children together, as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and ye would not. Behold, your house is left to you desolate." He was thinking of Jer. xxii. 5. "For I say unto you, ye shall not see me from now until ye say, 'Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord'" — the words in Ps. cxviii. 26.

What a heart-breaking sorrow it was to him that his own people, the religious leaders, the holy city, rejected him! It was a cry so bitter that it seems to shake us still with the anguish of God's love over those who will not have Him.

"Souls of men! why will ye scatter
Like a crowd of frighten'd sheep?
Foolish hearts! why will ye wander
From a love so true and deep?"

Leaving Jerusalem, he went to that Bethany on the Jordan, where John had baptized him. But though this afforded him safety, it did not offer him leisure. Crowds began to gather there as in the days of John, and he went on with his healing ministry (Matt. xix. 2). The Pharisees also followed him to watch him.

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And his own disciples were in a state of nervousness and irritation, which must have made them poor comforters to their Master in these closing three months.

The Pharisees asked him about divorce: Jesus forbade it altogether, except for the one sin of adultery. The fretful disciples said: "Then it would be better not to marry at all." "No," said Jesus, "unless a man remains unmarried in order to serve the kingdom of God," as Jesus himself had done.

Then a beautiful thing happened. Some parents brought their children to him, that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The irritated disciples forbade them. This made Jesus indignant. "Suffer the children, and hinder them not from coming to me. The kingdom of God belongs to such as they. You must be like them and receive it as they do, if you are ever to enter it." Then he threw his arms around the little ones, and put his hands on their heads and blessed them.

Another day, on the road, a young ruler of the synagogue came to him, and said: "Good teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus reminded him that the word "good" applied only to God. Then he told him to keep the commandments. This the young man thought he had done. Jesus then kissed him

on the brow and said : " Give away your wealth, and come and follow me." Poor fellow, he was rich and was not prepared for that ! Then Jesus told his disciples how hard it was for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven ; a camel could as easily go through a needle's eye. The irritated disciples objected. Who could be saved if this was so ? And Peter began to say how they had " left all " for him ; what should they have ? He might have said : Whatever you have done you should say you are unprofitable servants (Luke xvii. 10) ; this they would some time learn to say. But now he soothed and comforted them. And though he warned them by a story of labourers hired in a vineyard, and all paid the same day's wage, how the first might be last, the last first, he gave them the rich promise : " No one has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands for my sake and the gospel's, but he shall receive a hundredfold in this time, houses, brothers, sisters, father, mother, lands, with persecutions, and in the world to come life everlasting."

Thus he was trying up to the end to correct and to encourage these imperfect men, on whom so great a charge was soon to fall. They were indeed those who had followed him ; they were his own, his trusted friends ; and they were to

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have a hundred times more than all they had left; they were to become the founders of his Church, and their names would be held in everlasting remembrance.

In this way the weeks slipped by at Bethany beyond the Jordan, and the time drew near when he would go up to Jerusalem again, to die. Jesus wanted one last opportunity of convincing and assuring his disciples, so that when he died they would be confident of his resurrection, and able to carry on his work with holy confidence. This opportunity was now presented to him. At that other Bethany on the shoulder of the Mount of Olives, and in the house which of all earthly homes he loved best, a terrible trouble had come. His loving hostesses, Martha and Mary, sent to him—he was only about twenty miles away—to say that their brother Lazarus, whom Jesus loved, was ill. Jesus immediately saw what an opportunity was coming to them. In this sorrow of the beloved home at Bethany he would be able to show his disciples, and the inner circle of his friends, the truth which would best prepare them for his own death. He said to the disciples, as the first step in the lesson: "This illness will not be fatal; it has come for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it."

The messenger had taken a day to reach

him; but instead of setting off at once he remained two days more, and only on the third day said to his disciples: "Let us go into Judæa again." They protested: "Master, the Jews when we were there last sought to stone you. Are you going there again?" The answer of Jesus was: "There are the hours of daylight to walk in; when the night falls, we must stop." He knew well that the last deed of his day's work was approaching.

Then he broke to them the news thus: "Lazarus our friend has fallen asleep." They said: "If he sleeps he will get well." Then Jesus said: "Lazarus is dead. I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, in order that you may believe! Now let us go to him." Then the Twin Judas said to his fellow-disciples: "Let us also go that we may die with him!"

Thus they set out from Bethany beyond Jordan to Bethany on Mount Olivet. When they came to the burying-place of Bethany, about a mile out of the village, somehow Martha knew that he was coming and went out to meet him. Four days had gone since Lazarus had fallen asleep. The Jews always hoped for three days that the spirit might return to the deserted body, but on the fourth day they gave up hope. Martha therefore met him with

a cry of sorrow mingled with a touching faith: "If you had been here my brother would not have died. But as it is, I know that whatever you ask of God, God will give to you." Jesus said in his calm way: "Your brother shall rise again." "I know he will," replied Martha, "in the resurrection of the last day."

"I am the resurrection and the life," said Jesus; "whosoever believes on me, if he dies, shall live, and he who lives and believes on me shall not die for all eternity. Do you believe this?" She said fervently: "Yes, Lord, I have believed that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, that was to come into this world."

Meanwhile, Mary was in the house with the Jews who had walked over from Jerusalem to mourn with the sister. "Where is Mary?" asked Jesus. Martha ran back, entered the room and whispered to her sister, "The Teacher is here and wants you." At once she rose and hurried off on the road towards the tomb, and the Jews thought she was going to weep there. When she came to Jesus she fell at his feet and said the very words that Martha had spoken—they had said this together each day: "If only our Master had been here our brother would not have died."

Now the Jews came up. And Jesus, seeing the sorrow, was deeply and terribly moved.

"Where," he asked, "is the grave?" As they moved to the spot in that place of tombs, Jesus wept. And every one said: "How he loved him!" But he wept to show that we may weep, and that tears of love are hallowed.

The tomb was a cave cut in the rock, and a stone slab covered the entrance. "Remove the stone," said Jesus. Martha reminded him that in four days dissolution might have set in. "Did I not tell you that if you would believe you should see the glory of God?" he said. The stone was then removed, and Jesus prayed, that what was going to happen might make all believe in him. Then with a mighty voice he cried, "Lazarus, come forth!"

The voice that wakes the dead had spoken: the dead man came out wrapped in the grave-clothes, and the napkin on his face. "Loose him and let him go," said Jesus. The Jews who were present carried the news to the authorities, who were now sure that the people would hail the raiser of the dead as Messiah. There would be an insurrection, and the Roman Government would crush the remaining liberties of the nation. In the Council Caiaphas the high priest said a strange thing, which was an unconscious prophecy: "This man must be put to death for all, that the whole nation may not perish." He did not in the least understand

the deep meaning of his words. The highest authority of Judaism now quite decided to kill Jesus. And the High Priest now said that his death was to be the saving of men. "Not that nation only," says the Evangelist (John xi. 52)—it was all the world, for which Jesus was going to die.

But for the few days that remained before the Passover Jesus withdrew to Ephraim, a place twenty miles north of Jerusalem, near the scene of his temptation in those early days. There he recalled the past and prepared himself for the final act.

CHAPTER XXV

THE PASCHAL LAMB GOES UP TO JERUSALEM FOR THE PASSOVER

As the Passover was now drawing near, Jesus set out from Ephraim, that fruitful corn town, to join the pilgrims who were making their way to Jerusalem through the beautiful city of Jericho, lying amid its palms and balsams. He had with him the Twelve and also Salome, the mother of James and John. As they walked along the road he went on alone; there was something in his manner which filled them with wonder and fear. He knew exactly what was going to happen to him in Jerusalem. He was going up to be offered as the Paschal Lamb (to whom all Paschal lambs had pointed) at that Passover. When they rested he told them, now for the third time, but more in detail than before, what was before them: "We are going up to Jerusalem," he said, "and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the high priests and the

Scribes, and they will condemn him to death, and will betray him to the Gentiles, and will mock him and spit on him and scourge him and kill him, and the third day he will rise again." But they could not even now take it in. They thought they were going up for their Master to take his throne and establish the earthly kingdom, which was still in their thoughts. Accordingly Salome came to him, as a suitor comes to a king, and asked something from him. What was it? That her two sons should have the posts of honour in the kingdom. "Ah," said he kindly, out of the depths of his suffering soul, "can they drink the cup that I am now drinking, or be baptized with the baptism which I am undergoing?" The two brothers said: "We can." "Well, you shall," replied the Master, for he knew how these two would suffer for him afterwards; "but the places of trust go to those for whom they are prepared."

The runners in the race might come beforehand and ask for the prizes—no, the prizes are given at the end. The other ten apostles were very angry with the two. But Jesus set himself in their midst and said: "Earthly rulers lord it over others; the great have power over others. But you are different; with you the great is the servant, the first is the slave

of all; I came to be a servant and to give my life a ransom for many."

A ransom was the price paid to free captives who were taken in war. Jesus knew that he was going up to Jerusalem to give his life as the ransom to free men who were the captives of sin. "Christ bought us from the curse of the Law by becoming a curse for us, because it is written, 'Cursed is every one that is hung on a tree'" (Gal. iii. 10). "Know that you were ransomed not with perishable things, silver or gold, from your vain conversation delivered from your fathers, but with precious blood, as of a blameless and spotless lamb, Christ, fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, but manifested in these last times for you" (1 Peter i. 18).

In this way Jesus taught his apostles the meaning of the death that was now drawing near. They were still thinking of their own lives, their honour and their influence. He was thinking of death for the salvation of the world. No one can ever forget what Jesus said about his own death.

Soon the little company reached the stately city of Jericho, which Herod the Great had made his winter residence, so warm is the climate, so luxuriant the foliage. It was a priests' city too, where the priests lived when



"HE HEARD THAT JESUS THE NAZARENE WAS COMING ALONG"

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they were not discharging their course at Jerusalem.

It was Friday afternoon; to-morrow would be the sabbath, and they would have to stay over the day. A crowd gathered and followed him, for they had heard of all his wonderful works, but no one in that priestly city asked him to his house. He walked through the streets and out at the southern gate. There was a blind man, the son of Timæus, begging by the way. He heard that Jesus the Nazarene was coming along. Somehow he was sure that Jesus was Messiah—or in the current phrase, son of David. "Pity me," he cried. People told him to be quiet. Jesus had the air of one going to a great event. How could he be troubled with a beggar? But the beggar cried the louder: "Son of David, pity me." Jesus stood still and said: "Call him." When the crowd heard this they said to the beggar: "Courage, rise, he calls you." In his joy the beggar flung off his coat, leapt up, and came. "What do you want me to do?" said the Lord. "Rabboni"—that is the utmost title of respect—"that I may get my sight back," answered the man. "Go," said Jesus, "your faith has saved you." His sight came to him, and he followed Jesus in the way.

But where was Jesus to stay that sabbath

in the city of Herod and the priests? The question was answered in a remarkable way. A short man had climbed up into a sycamore tree to see the Nazarene teacher as he passed by. His name was Zacchæus, a tax-gatherer, who had grown rich at the hateful business, and was treated by all the Jews as an outcast. When Jesus came to the sycamore he looked up and said: "Zacchæus, make haste and get down, for to-day I must stay in your house." This wealthy but hated man climbed down, and with great delight took Jesus to his house, which was probably outside the southern gate. The people of that priestly city said indignantly: "Fancy, he is lodging with a sinner." But Jesus was only doing what he had done all along, he received sinners. Two of his apostles were *publicans*, tax-collectors.

The effect of his action on Zacchæus was immediate. Softened and penitent for all his sins, he placed himself before Jesus, and solemnly declared that he would give half his property to the poor, and would repay fourfold everything that he had taken wrongfully in his business. Immediately Jesus accepted his faith and his penitence, claimed him as a son of Abraham, who was the father of the faithful, and told him that salvation had come to that

house. Then he explained to every one why he had come to the house of Zacchæus, by saying: "The Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost."

Jesus had come to his last sabbath on earth. He would go to the synagogue at Jericho, and as every one was expecting some great event soon to happen, and "the Kingdom of God to appear," he spoke to them, in order to show that there would be a long interval before the final day should dawn. In that city the Herods every one would remember how, thirty years before, Archelaus had gone to Rome to gain his father's kingdom from Augustus, and how the people sent a message to Rome, to prevent the succession. With this fact in their minds he told them a story: "A man of high birth went to a distant country to get a kingdom and to return. He gave to each of his slaves about four pounds to trade with and restore to him on his return. But his people hated him, and sent after him to say that they would not acknowledge him. When he came back he called his slaves; one had made the four pounds into forty; another had made them into twenty; one had done nothing with the money. The new king raised the faithful slaves to be governors of cities, and the four pounds of the useless slave was given to the

one who had multiplied his money tenfold. Then the king ordered the traitors who would not have him to reign over them to be executed.

In this way Jesus taught them all that he would be away a long time before he came to reign, and they must use the gifts he left them for him.

The sabbath was over, and next day they started for Jerusalem by the Ascent of Blood. After a walk of twelve miles they came to Bethany, where the beloved family lived. There Simon—who had been a leper, and had been healed by him—asked him to dinner. Martha came over to the house to manage the meal, and Lazarus was also a guest. But when the men were reclining at the table, Mary came in with her hair loose, remembering how she had come long ago at Magdala in the house of another Simon, the Pharisee. She had brought an alabaster vase of delicious nard. Instead of pouring the precious stuff, which was worth twelve pounds, on his head, she emptied the whole of it on his feet, so that the house was filled with the fragrance. Judas Iscariot, who was the treasurer of the little company, was annoyed at this waste, as he considered it, though he hid his meanness under the pretence that he would have given the money to the poor. But Jesus, knowing

well the end of his present journey, said touchingly: "She is doing it for my burial." He added a strange and wonderful prophecy, that wherever his great message should be preached, this act of Mary's would be remembered.

About four hundred years after Chrysostom at Constantinople said that it had been told even in the distant British Islands. We now in the British Islands can say how it is told in Japan and in the South Seas. All the world will hear how Mary that day anointed Jesus for the burial which drew near.

It was soon known at Jerusalem that the Propnet of Nazareth was coming up to the Passover. Especially the Jewish authorities knew of it, and decided to put poor Lazarus to death, because every one was talking of the wonderful recovery which Jesus had wrought for him. They were determined to make away with Jesus at this Passover, to offer him as the true and final Paschal Lamb.

Jesus was quite clear in his course. He was coming to Jerusalem to die. The time had arrived to show the city who he was. The Rabbis said that the words of the prophet Zechariah (ix. 9) referred to Messiah, who would come riding on an ass; though they did not

know how to reconcile that with Daniel, who said Messiah would come in glory. But Jesus announced to Jerusalem that he was Messiah by carrying out the prophecy of Zechariah. The day after the dinner, Monday, as we should call it, he told two of his disciples to enter the village of Bethphage, between Bethany and Jerusalem, and to borrow an ass and her foal for him. Mounting the animal he rode down the hill towards the city. Just as the city came in sight he broke into a cry of sorrow over it: "If thou hadst known the things that belonged to thy peace!" and then he pictured the terrible scenes of the siege which occurred about forty years later (Luke xix. 42-45).

But now the crowd from the city met him, and welcomed him as Messiah, throwing down the branches of the trees and even their clothes for the ass to walk on, and shouting, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Ps. cxviii. 26), just as he said they would when he last left the city (Matt. xiii. 39). The Pharisees asked him to silence these cries of adoration: "If these were silent the stones would cry out," he said.

The Pharisees were dismayed at his popularity. "The whole world is gone after him,"

they said, and began to take steps to seize him and bring him to his death.

When he entered the city he went straight to the temple, which overhung the Kedron valley and faced him as he descended from the Mount of Olives. He entered the court and did just what he had done at the beginning of his ministry, drove out the motley crowd of traders and money-changers, whom the authorities allowed to be there for the money they paid. "My house shall be called a house of prayer," he said, "and you have made it a den of thieves." Into the cleared court crowded the blind and the lame, and Jesus, in his accustomed way, proceeded to heal them. The children of the city also thronged around him, and sang the Messianic song which they had caught from the crowd as it entered the city: "Hosanna to the Son of David!" Of course the authorities were indignant, but to their protest he answered: "Did you never read: 'Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise'?" (Ps. viii. 2).

When the work was over he remained seated in front of the great horns into which the people threw their gifts for the temple service. Many brought gold and silver coins, but among

the rest came a poor widow, who put in two mites, about the value of a farthing. This immediately attracted the attention of Jesus. He called his twelve apostles to him—they were standing about in the court—and gave them, as one of his last lessons which he wished them to remember and to teach, the example of this widow. She had given more than all the others, he said; for the others had given of their abundance, but she had given of her poverty, had given her very living. That was the kind of gift which Jesus would value for all time.

The night of this eventful day was now falling. The Messiah had declared himself and been welcomed by the children and the childlike. He now left the city, but not to seek a home. He went to a Garden of Olives on the slope of the Mount of Olives, to pass the night in the open air. The Son of Man had not where to lay his head. In the morning he returned to continue his work in the city. He was hungry, and by the roadside there was a fig-tree in leaf. Often there are some fruits on the boughs even in the early spring, and Jesus thought he might find a fig for his breakfast. But no, there was nothing to eat. It flashed into his mind how like that

fig-tree was to Jerusalem and the Jews. He had come hoping for a harvest, and had been disappointed. With a deep meaning—for it was an acted parable—he said, "Let no one eat fruit of this tree again." In the evening, when they passed the unfruitful tree, it had withered away. Yes, it was a sign of that misguided people and that rebellious city.

It was for the coming of this Messiah that Judaism had existed. The temple had been built as the type of the Spiritual Temple which he was to raise. Now the Messiah had come, and because he came lowly and humble, with the deep truth of the spiritual Kingdom of God, and the words such as never man spoke, they could not or would not recognize him. They were determined to kill him. And just as the fig-tree withered away, the city which knew not the day of its visitation would in a few years be destroyed by Titus, and the people who crucified their Messiah would be scattered over the earth, still a distinct people, but without a land of their own, a perpetual proof of the truth of the Christ whom they had rejected.

Each night of this last week Jesus and his disciples slept in Gethsemane, and each day

he came into Jerusalem to teach, to heal, and to meet the sacrificial death for which he was now ready.

The Paschal Lamb had ascended to Jerusalem to be offered.

CHAPTER XXVI

LAST CONFLICT WITH THE RULERS : THEIR CONDEMNATION

It was now the third day of the last week of his life, Tuesday as we should call it. On the Thursday would be the Last Supper and Gethsemane, on the Friday the Cross. But the last two days of the ministry were filled with the attacks which his enemies made on him, in order to find a ground for bringing him to death, and with his great last charge against them, and finally—perhaps this occupied the Wednesday—with a great prophecy of what would happen after his death, to the end of the world.

Now we can follow what happened on the Tuesday, when Jesus came in from his open-air bivouac, and entered the temple to teach and to work.

He was walking round the temple when a company of "priests and scribes and elders" met him and asked him by what authority he had cleansed the temple on the previous day,

and who gave him authority to teach and work as he did. Immediately the people in the courts gathered round eager to listen. Jesus said: "I will tell you, if you will tell me whether the baptism of John was from heaven or from man." If they said, from heaven, they were obliged to believe Jesus, because John had proclaimed him to be the Messiah. If they said, from man, there was all that eager crowd listening, every one of whom believed John to have been a prophet. They had to make the lame answer: "We do not know." To men so cunning and yet so weak Jesus would give no account of his authority. But he pushed home a question which they answered, and in doing so condemned themselves. "A man said to his two sons: go and work in the vineyard. One said he would, and did not; the other said he would not, and did; which did the father's will?" They answered almost mechanically, the last. Well, they were like the first: with loud professions, they never obeyed. When John came, a prophet in just the way of righteousness which Judaism enjoined, they resisted him. But the publicans and sinners were like the second son. They seemed to resist, but they repented and obeyed (Luke vii. 29, 30). Thus they had rejected John, and now they were seeking to lay hold

of Jesus and bring him to his death. Jesus now showed them in a parable exactly what they were doing. They were like vinedressers to whom a man left his vineyard while he was away. When he sent to them a slave to receive the fruit of the vintage, they beat him and sent him back. Another slave was sent, whom they beheaded and outraged. Others were sent, and all were treated in the same way.

But the man had a son, whom he dearly loved. If I send my son, he thought, they will attend to him. But the vinedressers said: "This is the heir, let us kill him, and the vineyard will be ours." And they killed him and cast his dead body out of the gate.

Ah, what shall be done with these men? Will not the owner come and punish them and take away the vineyard?

This son was Jesus, as the slaves had been the prophets; these rulers of Judaism were about to kill him and to fulfil the words of the Psalm (cxviii. 22, 23)—

"The stone which the builders rejected became the headstone of the corner ;

This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes."

Jesus could hardly say more distinctly that he was the Son of God, or that by his approaching death he would do the work which he had been sent to do.

But now there was a movement in the crowd. Some of the Scribes had brought a woman to Jesus, hoping to lure him to do or say something which would set the people against him, and make it easy to arrest him without their interference.

The woman had been caught in a sin which, according to the Law, was punished with stoning. They asked him what should be done with her. If he said: Stone her, that would shock the people, for the old harsh law was not carried out. But if he said: Let her go, that would seem a slur upon the Law, and they would charge him with disrespect to Moses.

Never did Jesus do anything more wonderful than he now did. He stooped down and began to trace letters with his finger on the temple floor. Then he looked up and said: "Let the one of you who is without sin be the first to cast a stone against her." Then he stooped again and continued to write. Conscience began to work. In the Sanhedrin opinions were given, beginning with the youngest. But now these seemingly righteous men began to slink away, beginning with the eldest. Even the crowd drew back ashamed, and the disciples averted their heads. There was only one without sin there; that was he who was stooping to the ground.

Presently he looked up again. He and the woman were alone: pity and the pitiable were face to face. "Woman," he said, "where are your accusers? Did no one condemn you?" She said: "No one, Lord." And Jesus said to her: "Neither do I condemn you: go and sin no more."

But the forces of opposition were only scattered for a moment. All the parties in Jerusalem, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Herodians, who were bitterly opposed to one another, now gathered together to entrap him, and find the occasion for arresting him which they were seeking. The Pharisees tried to find a charge against him which they could bring before the Roman Government. The money in use was stamped with the image and name of the Roman Emperor; for the Jewish people were in subjection. "Is it lawful," asked the Pharisees, "to pay the taxes to the Emperor?" If he said yes, the people would think him no patriot, and certainly no Messiah. But if he said no, there was the charge at once to bring before Pilate, the Roman Governor. Jesus asked to see a coin. It was shown to him, and on it he read: *Ti. Cæsar Divi Aug. f. Augustus Pontif. Max.*, that is, "Tiberius Cæsar, son of the god Augustus, Augustus, Pontifex Maximus." "Who is this?" he

asked. "Cæsar," they said. "Then give back Cæsar his own, and to God His own."

The Pharisees were baffled by his wisdom. But the Sadducees came forward with a question, which, though foolish, was not malignant. They did not believe in a future life, and thought they could disprove it by an absurd case. In the Law if a man died childless before his wife, his brother was to take her, and the children born would be the heirs of the dead man. If seven brothers in turn had her, whose wife would she be in the future world? Then Jesus gave a most beautiful answer. In that future world marriage is no more. The happy spirits are like angels. They are sons of God as sons of the resurrection. And, he added, the future life is proved because God is God. He is the God of the living. If, therefore, He is called the God of Abraham, of Isaac, of Jacob, these must be living too, and all of whom He is the God must live.

Some of the Pharisees, who believed in the resurrection, could not help breaking into applause at this answer to their opponents the Sadducees. It was an argument for the after life drawn from Exodus (iii. 2, 6), the very part of the Scriptures which the Sadducees themselves considered divine. Indeed, one of

the Scribes was so struck with the answer that he put to him the question which was often discussed in the schools: there were said to be 613 distinct precepts in the Law, now which was the greatest? Jesus gave his approval to an answer which the best of the Rabbis had given. Deut. vi. 4, 5 was the greatest; Lev. xix. 18 was the second:

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and all thy soul, and all thy mind, and all thy strength, and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

The Scribe was greatly pleased, and said that Jesus had given the best answer. To love God was more important than all the sacrifices. For a moment it seemed as if the Jewish rulers were yielding to the wisdom and authority of Jesus. At any rate Jesus said to this one: "You are not far from the kingdom of God." And now he closed the long discussion with a question addressed to them which, from their own standpoint, might have led them to recognize who he was. There is a Psalm (cx.) which they all understood to refer to Messiah:

"The Lord [that is, God] said to my Lord [that is, Messiah], Sit thou at My right hand until I put thine enemies beneath My feet."

The psalm was supposed to have been written by David. He therefore speaks of Messiah as my Lord and my God. But the Rabbis also taught that Messiah was to be David's son. How could David call his son my Lord and my God?

If these men had only been willing to open their eyes, they would have seen that, according to their own theory, Messiah would be divine, and they would have understood that the Messiah was before them claiming to be divine.

But they were blind. And Jesus now uttered seven Woes upon them; pitying and yet judging them. They stood condemned before him. They were blind leaders of the people.

Alas for them, for they shut the kingdom of heaven against men!

Alas for them, for they make converts, but make them worse than they were!

Alas for them, they encourage false oaths.

Alas for them, they insist on the unimportant, and neglect the important things.

Alas for them, they cleanse the outside, but not the inside.

Alas for them, they are like the white tombs, filled with decaying bones.

Alas for them, they build the tombs of

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all the prophets, from Abel in Genesis to Zechariah in Chronicles (2 Chron. xxiv. 20-22).

And now they were going to kill not only the prophets, the slaves sent by the absent owner of the vineyard, but the Son himself.

But while his own people were going to put him to death, he had one great joy. There were some Greeks at the feast, who came to Philip and asked to see Jesus.

When Jesus saw them he saw in vision all the Gentiles, all the nations of the earth, finally coming to him, and he saw that his death would accomplish the object, as a seed falls into the ground, and by dying becomes a harvest!

Was he tempted to go away and preach to the Gentiles who might receive him, and leave Jerusalem that would kill him? No, he would stay and die. By being lifted up on a cross he would draw those nations—all men—to him.

Again, as at the Baptism, and at the Transfiguration, a voice came out of heaven, in answer to his prayer, "Father, glorify Thy name." The voice said, "I have and I will."

Then to those Greeks he spoke the final

words, telling how the Father had sent him into the world as the Light, that all may believe in Him, and walk in the light. The Father's words in him were eternal life, and these words he now (and for ever) speaks to them (and to all). John xii. 44-50.

CHAPTER XXVII

THINGS TO COME

JESUS had ended all his teaching to the people, and his warning to the Jewish rulers, when he left the temple that Tuesday evening. Only two days of his life now remained, and those he gave entirely to his twelve apostles, to whom his love burned stronger as the time of departure drew nigh. But in these two days he wished to give them some idea of what would happen when he had gone: to warn them of the troubles that would come, to tell them of the work that they should do, and of the blessed end of their labours and of his.

As they left the temple that night the disciples pointed to its magnificence, the vast blocks of marble, some of them forty-five feet long, five high, and six broad, set together in gold. The superb white mass gleamed from afar like a snow-mountain in the sunset. It was the pride of Israel, and Jesus himself loved it as his Father's house. But now he turned to

his disciples and said: "Not one stone shall be left on another; but all will be demolished."

They were startled by this announcement, but they passed on that night to their bivouac in Gethsemane. Next morning they all went to the top of the Mount of Olives, where, across the valley of the Kedron, they looked upon the glorious temple buildings, which flashed in the light of the sun. They began at once, Peter and James, John and Andrew, to ask him what he meant by that saying about the temple. Then he unfolded to them what was going to happen. It was a long and wonderful account, which occupied all the day; and we cannot wonder that the report of this great prophecy is somewhat confusing. First of all he told them that within that generation—it was actually forty-one years after, the year A.D. 70—Jerusalem would be besieged and destroyed. It was a city spiritually dead. Around a dead body the vultures always gathered. Around this dead body would be the eagles of Rome. It was the Roman Emperor Titus who besieged and destroyed the city and burnt the temple.

He warned them how terrible the siege would be, and told them to escape before the enemy's lines were drawn about the city. What actually brought on the final punishment of Rome was the disturbance about a false Messiah. The

disciples would be secure from this, because they knew that Messiah had come. But they had days of suffering before them. They would be brought before courts and kings, scourged in synagogues, martyred for his sake. But they were not to fear; the Spirit would teach them what to say. Hated and persecuted, if they would be patient to the end, they should certainly be saved. But the terror and suffering which would come in the siege of Jerusalem would not be the end.

He looked far beyond—over a tract of time the length of which was not known even to him. This "gospel of the kingdom" which he was entrusting to them, with the story of the death and resurrection which were now approaching, must be preached to all nations. It was to cover the earth—they must be prepared for long delay. But at last the prophecy of Isa. xxxiv. 4, and of Dan. vii. 13, would be fulfilled, and amid signs in heaven and on earth men should see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory, to gather his elect from the four winds, from the end of the earth to the end of heaven (Zech. ii. 6; Deut. xxx. 4).

"Watch and work," he said to them, "you, while you live, and all who believe on me, until the end." And then, in his accustomed way,

he told them two stories which they never could forget, the one to show how we must all watch, the other to show how we must all work : the story of the Ten Virgins and the story of the Talents.

In the East a marriage takes place after sunset; the bridegroom brings his bride to the wedding feast in his house, attended by his friends and hers. This was the story: "Once there were ten maidens who were to meet the bridegroom and go in with him to the feast. They each had a lamp burning when the night came. But for some reason or other the bridegroom was late. And as they waited they fell asleep. The hours slipped past, and it was twelve o'clock, when the shout rose: 'Here is the bridegroom! Go out to meet him!' All started up and trimmed their lamps. But the lamps were burning low, and required oil. Five had been wise enough to bring a little cruse of oil with them; but five had not. Foolish girls! they now asked the others for their oil. But the five wise girls said: 'Perhaps it will not be enough for us and you; go rather and buy for yourselves.' But while they had gone to buy, the bridegroom arrived, and the five maidens with the lamps burning went in with him to the house. And the door was shut. When, later on, the foolish maidens

came back with their oil, they knocked, and said: 'Lord, Lord, open to us.' But he said: 'Indeed I tell you I know you not.'"

Thus Jesus showed the disciples that they were to watch, and to have that supply in themselves which, even if they were sleeping, would make them ready at any time to rise and meet him when he came.

Then, to show that they must work for him as well as watch, he told this other story: "A man went away for a long time, and put his property into the hands of his slaves; to one he gave £1,065, to another half that amount, and to a third £213, to each according to his ability. A long time passed, and then the man came back to take account of his slaves. The first was able to show that he had doubled the amount entrusted to him. 'Well done, good and faithful slave,' said the master, 'you have been faithful in a few things, I will set you over many; come, no longer a slave, and share my position.' The second, with less ability, had yet doubled what had been left to him; and the master said exactly the same to him as to the first. But the slave who had only one talent came and said that he had done nothing with it. He abused his master as a greedy and grasping man, and now he gave him back just what had been given to him. The master said:

'Take away the one talent and give it to the first; and push this useless slave out into the dark, where such people will weep and gnash their teeth.'

In this way Jesus made them feel that they (and we) must be busy for him till he comes, even if it should be much longer than they thought.

And then, without any parable, Jesus drew a picture of what the return of the Master, the coming of the Bridegroom, will be like. The picture is so wonderful that we must look at it very closely, and it has often been so misunderstood that we must try our best to understand it.

The Son of Man will come in his glory and all the angels with him. Then will he sit upon the throne of his glory. It will be like a great judgment day. All the nations will be gathered before him, not the Christians or the Jews alone, but all mankind. By then the gospel will have been preached to them all, but all mankind will be there, the myriads who died before Christ came, as well as those who have died since, without knowing him. Jesus will take his place on the tribunal as the judge of all mankind—that is the sublime thought that he wished to leave with his disciples as he approached his death.

And the countless myriads of mankind will fall on his right hand or on his left, just as a shepherd might separate the sheep and the goats at folding time. To that vast company on his right, gathered from all ages and from all nations, out of the distant and forgotten past, and out of the historical peoples whom we have known, the Judge will then say: "Come, you blessed of my Father, inhabit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Then the reason for this glorious call will be given: "For I hungered and you gave me to eat; I thirsted and you gave me to drink; I was a stranger and you took me in; naked and you clothed me; I was ill and you visited me; I was in prison and you came to me."

Then they will say in astonishment: "When did we do these things?" Some of them had never known the name of Jesus—none of them, except the few companions of his earthly years, had ever had an opportunity of serving him personally. They cannot understand how they came to be placed on his right hand.

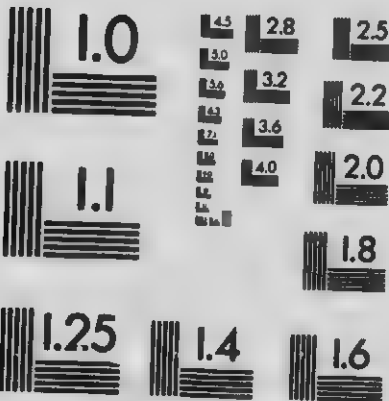
Then the Judge will explain to them the mystery: "Indeed I tell you so far as you did this to one of these my brothers, even the least, you did it to me."

Jesus claims all mankind as his brothers, and



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asks that all should do deeds of love and render help to all. And whatever good has been done to men by any, he considers that it has been done to him.

This is perhaps the most wonderful thing in the whole story. We have seen him doing good all his lifetime, and he is just going to die for men. Here is his wide and lofty view: all the good that all do to others, is his. They who do it are at his right hand, heirs of the kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world.

But to those on the left hand he will say: "Depart from me, cursed, into the æonian fire prepared for the Slanderer and his emissaries." And the reason for the stern sentence will be that they have not done good to others, and therefore have not done good to him.

This image, therefore, Jesus left to the world, as he spoke that day on the Mount of Olives. Even the Moslems of Jerusalem believe that he will come at the end to that very valley which he overlooked, and judge the world.

He will judge all mankind on this principle: all the good men have done to one another he will take as done to himself, and it will bring them into his kingdom. But the evil they have done to one another will be taken as done to him,—and even the good omitted will be

treated as refused to him—and they who have thus come short will go into æonian punishment, that is to say, a punishment in the world beyond. The nature and the length of that punishment he did not explain, but he left one word which lights up even the gloom of that house of pain: "That slave who knew his master's will and did not prepare or do his will shall be beaten with many, but the one who did not know, and did things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few."

The Judge of the world is absolutely just and absolutely merciful.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE EVENING BEFORE THE END

THE last day of this marvellous life had now come. It was Thursday, as we should call it. It was the day of the Paschal Feast. All Jerusalem was remembering how Israel came out of Egypt, and how the lintels of the doors were sprinkled with blood, so that the destroying angel should not visit the houses of Israelites.

Every household had its lamb, which was taken to the temple and offered at the altar. Then came the roasted flesh, with wine and unleavened bread, bitter herbs (to remind them of the servitude of Egypt), and the *charosheth*, a paste of crushed fruits and vinegar (to remind them of the clay with which they made bricks in Egypt). This was the feast. That evening in Jerusalem, at six o'clock, when the day of the feast began, every family would be assembled at the board.

That morning the disciples asked Jesus where he would keep the feast, not yet in the least understanding that he was the Paschal Lamb.

Lamb for the world, typified by all the lambs that were now prepared in Jerusalem. He had made his arrangement. There was a house he knew in the city. Some think it was the house of John Mark, the writer of our second Gospel, or of his mother, Mary. There, on an arranged signal, supper was to be prepared. A servant was to go through the street with a water-pot on his head, which would attract notice, because only women carried the water. The disciples would see the man and so be led to the right house.

Why was it necessary to take precautions? The answer is terribly sad. The rulers were in council to arrest and bring Jesus to judgment, and they had agreed to wait till the feast was over, when the crowds would have left the city. But on that day, as Jesus well knew, his own disciple, Judas Iscariot, had gone to them secretly, offering to put him into their hands quietly that evening when no one would know, and no disturbance would be made. This unexpected offer made them resolve to act at once, feast or no feast. They gave Judas thirty shekels, the price of a slave, and he was to lead their servants to the retreat where the Master lodged each night.

The preparation had to be carried out, therefore, quietly, and only when night fell did

Jesus come into the doomed city. The disciples had got everything ready. Judas also was there with the purse. And at the proper time the Master and the Twelve lay down on the couches round the table, each leaning on his left arm, with the right free to eat.

You can hardly believe it, but these blind and stupid men at this moment began to quarrel again as to which of them should be greatest. Jesus said to them: "I am among you as a servant." Then he told them tenderly that as they had been with him in his trials, they should sit with him in his kingdom, and should even be on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Could they not learn that service was kingship? He would teach them presently.

The Passover feast began by passing round a cup of wine and water, and giving thanks. As this was done, Jesus said with a deep and touching solemnity: "I greatly desired to eat this Paschal feast with you before I suffer. For I tell you I shall not eat it again until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God."

He would drink of the fruit of the vine new in the kingdom of God. Until that great day, they would have to keep this feast without his visible presence.

After the first cup, the head of the household explained the meaning of the Passover. At this

point, then, Jesus gave the explanation of the Supper which they were now going to eat. He rose, laid aside his garments, and girded himself with a towel. Then, pouring water into a basin, he began to wash the feet of the disciples one by one. This was a servant's task. Peter was horrified to see his Master doing this lowly task. "Do you wash *my* feet?" he cried. "What I am doing," replied the Master, "you do not understand now, but you shall afterwards." "You shall never wash *my* feet!" said the impulsive and loving disciple. "But," said Jesus, "unless I wash you, you have no part with me." Then Peter, in his impetuous way, veered round. "Not my feet only, but my head and my hands!" he cried. But Jesus, with his patient smile, said: "When a man has been thoroughly bathed, all he wants is this washing of the feet, and he is quite clean. And you are clean, but not all"—for he felt the presence of the traitor.

There was a saying that nothing should be done "with unwashed feet," that is, without due preparation. And Jesus was teaching his followers that nothing could be done unless they were humble, and ready to wash each other's feet.

When the washing was over he said to them: "You must not be called Rabbi, or Father, or

Leader. But as God is your Father and Christ is your leader, you must be servants of one another."

And this has been the sign ever since by which the disciples of Jesus have been known: they do not seek honour, or power, or money, but they seek to serve and to help others. They always see before them Jesus washing their feet.

Now they took the unleavened bread and the bitter herbs in their hands, and began to eat. But the trouble in the heart of Jesus broke out. "I tell you that one of you will betray me!" Leonardo da Vinci in his great picture tried to show the terror and grief on the faces of the Twelve when Jesus said this. Every one said, "It is not I, is it, Lord?" And Judas actually said: "It is not I, Rabbi, is it?"

Peter, who lay behind Jesus, beckoned to John, who lay on the other side, to ask him who it was. John leaned back his head on the Lord's breast and asked. Jesus whispered that it was the one to whom he would give the bread dipped in the *charosheth*. This he immediately did to Judas. Judas took it, and "Satan entered into him." Jesus then told him to do what he was going to do; every one thought that, as he kept the purse, he was sent to buy something for the feast, or, what was more in the manner of the Master, to give something to

the poor. Judas rose and went out. The night was dark, as suited the deed of darkness.

But this was not all. Jesus now turned to his most faithful follower, and, calling him by his old name, he said: "Simon, Simon, behold Satan desired to have you all, to sift you as wheat. And for you personally I have prayed, that your faith may not fail. When you are converted, strengthen your brethren." "I am ready to go with you, Lord, to prison or to death," said the fervent disciple. "I tell you, Peter," replied the Lord, "the cock will not crow to-day until you have three times denied that you know me."

"Yes, you will all be offended in me to-night, as Zechariah says (xiii. 7): 'I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.' But," he added, with mysterious comfort, "when I am risen I will go before you into Galilee"—that dear land, far from the bloody city, where they had first learnt of him.

Now the meal proceeded. All ate of the Paschal Lamb. And then in a solemn way, which no one could ever afterwards forget, Jesus took a small loaf, and offered thanks, and broke it, and gave it to the eleven, saying: "Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. This do in remembrance of me."

When the meal was over, he took a cup, and

offered thanks again, a eucharist, and gave to them, saying: "Drink all of you of it, this is my blood of the covenant which is shed for many for the remission of sins."

This memorable act on the last evening of his life is repeated in every church in Christendom. It never allows us to forget that Jesus was himself the Paschal offering, the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world, and the Bread of Life that is given for the life of the world. It explains the death on the cross which took place on the following day, and compels us to see that his blood was shed that our sins might be forgiven. That command, "This do," has entered into the hearts of all the disciples of Jesus. They are eager to do this. They feel that it is what their Master asked of them, and that in doing it they are blessed.

And every time any of us take the bread and wine in remembrance of him we show his death until he come.

"And thus that dark betrayal night,
With the last advent we unite,
By one blest chain of loving rite,
Until he come."

An exquisite calm now fell upon the company. They knew that he was going to die and to be taken from them, and the trouble was in their hearts and on their faces. But a great

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comfort was stealing in. "Let not your hearts be troubled," he began to say to them. "You believe in God, and in me you believe. In my Father's house are many lodgings. If I had not been so I would have told you. Because I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go and prepare a place for you I come again, and I will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also." Then he went on to meet all their questions and their fears. He was, he said, the way to the Father, the way, the truth, and the life. In coming to him they had come to the Father. All the time the Father had been working in him. His whole life had been the work of God. If they would believe in him, their lives should be like his, and they should do even more than he had done, because he would be with the Father helping them. When he was gone they might pray and ask for everything in his name, and it should be given to them. If they loved and obeyed, he would come to them in the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, so that they would not be like orphans. The Holy Spirit would teach them and bring to their minds all that he had done and taught. Therefore he said: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give you, not as the world gives I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, let it not play the coward."

The end was very near, and he must carry through the task which yet lay before him; and there was not time to say much more. But when he would come, the Paraclete would come, and the Father Himself would hold them in His love.

They now sang the Hallel, the beautiful psalms which were always sung at the Passover. And then Jesus said: "Rise, let us go."

His last meal was over. His words of comfort were spoken. Still talking to them, they went out into the night towards their familiar garden. And meanwhile Judas the traitor was informing the servants of the priests how and where they might find and arrest his Master.

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CHAPTER XXIX

HIS LAST NIGHT ON EARTH

JESUS rose and left the upper room because the traitor had gone out, and might possibly bring the servants of the high priests and the Roman soldiers to that room, and Jesus had yet something to say to his own, though not much more now.

After midnight on that Passover day the temple was open. All the feasts in the houses were over. And as the little company made their way to the Mount of Olives they would pass the temple, and might tread its courts lighted by the moon. Over the gateway there was carved a wreath of golden vines, the clusters of which were as large as a man. This beautiful vine was understood to be a symbol of Israel, for in the Old Testament Israel is often likened to a vine; and also it represented the coming Messiah, as the Aramaic paraphrase of Ps. lxxx. 15, 16 in the Targum shows: "O God of hosts, turn now again, look from heaven and see and remember in mercy

this vine, and the vine-shoot which Thy right hand hath planted, and the King, Messiah, whom Thou hast established for Thyself."

Here in the solemn night Jesus told the eleven that he was the Vine, and that they were the branches. They must keep in him, just as the branches keep in the vine, and in that way they would bear fruit. While they kept in him they might ask anything of God and it would be done for them. Then he told them how he loved them, and how he wished them to love one another. He would give them his joy. They were not slaves, but his friends, and through them he would bear fruit for the world. Yet they must be prepared for the world's hatred; as the world was going to kill him, it would try to kill them. The sin of the world was great; it hated him and his Father. Again he told them that the Paraclete should come, "the Spirit of truth which proceeds from the Father," and he added, "He shall testify of me, and then you must testify, because from the beginning you have been with me."

He told them how they would be persecuted for his sake, so that when it happened they would not be surprised or disappointed.

He was just going to leave them. But that was good for them, because only so would the Paraclete come to them. He would tell them

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the things which they could not bear to hear just then. He would lead them into all truth. He would make Jesus live with them and glorify Jesus, so that while in one sense they saw Jesus no more, in another sense, that is in the Spirit, they would see him and know him better than ever. It was a moment of travail that was coming to them in Gethsemane and Calvary, but then would come the great joy, for they would find their Lord, in the Paraclete, speaking to them with perfect plainness.

"I came out from the Father," he said solemnly, "and I have come into the world. Again I leave the world and go to the Father." This was a moment of revelation, and the disciples broke out in exultation: "Now you speak without a parable, now we know that you know all things and need not that any ask you; by this we believe that you came out from God."

Thus they made their covenant, to be sealed soon with blood, the Lord and his disciples.

Still there was a dark hour to come. They would leave him and be scattered. But he would not be alone. And for them, his frail followers, he left his peace. They would have trouble in the world. "But be of good courage," he said, "I have conquered the world."

By this time they had left the city and crossed the valley of the Kedron, red with the blood of the lambs which had been sacrificed for the Passover. They made their way to the garden on the hillside, which had been their nightly resort through the week. Gethsemane means, "The close of the oil press." The trees in it were olives. "The oil of joy for mourning"—that was probably his thought as he entered the garden for the last time.

It was a private garden, belonging, perhaps, to John Mark, or to Mary his mother, and there they could be alone. No one knew that they were there—except the traitor, and evidently Jesus knew that there the traitor would find him.

In the seventeenth chapter of John there is the prayer which Jesus offered for his disciples before leaving the city, but whether it was in the upper room, or in the temple, or by the way, we cannot say. Certainly it was before they reached Gethsemane. But the prayer for his disciples was only just before the prayer for himself in the garden. The two lie side by side. The one is all victory, the other is all anguish, the anguish by which the victory was won.

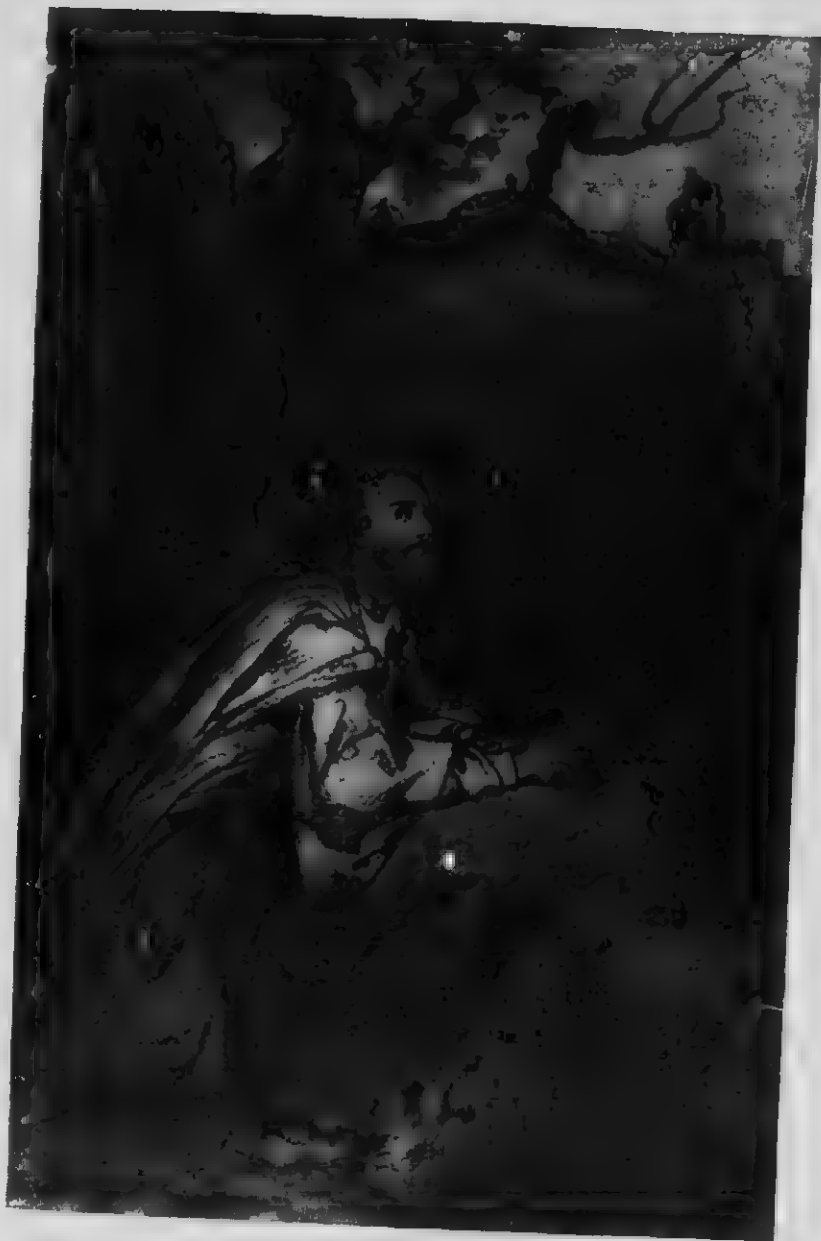
The prayer must be read in the Gospel itself. It is too wonderful to touch or to alter. He

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"BEARING IN HIS SOUL THE SIN OF ALL THE WORLD"

[To face p. 278]

asked for the glory which he had always had with the Father before creation; but he asked that his friends might see it. In the world where they were to remain a little while for him—"Father, keep them," he cried. Might they have his joy, might they preach his word, might they be in the world as he had been, sanctified in truth! And might all who should believe in him through their word be one, just as he and the Father were one! Might the Father love them as He loved him!

In this great way he committed to God those whom he had trained and prepared to preach him to the world. We seem to hear that prayer always rising for us.

But now they entered the garden, and he said to them: "Sit here while I pray." Then he took Peter and James and John with him, as he had taken them up the Mount of Transfiguration. And as they went farther into the olive grove he began to be overwhelmed with sorrow and depression. He said, quoting a Psalm (xliii. 5): "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, unto death." And he asked the three to watch with him. Then, going a little apart from them, he fell on his face and prayed. An hour passed in anguish: he was bearing in his soul the sin of all the world; so appalling was it that he asked that if it were possible the

hour might pass. "Abba," he cried, using the 'Aramaic word for Father, "all things are possible to Thee; take this cup from me; yet not what I will, but what Thou wilt."

No one saw that agony, for the three, weary with the events of the day, had fallen asleep. At the end of the hour Jesus came and said to Peter, using the old name for him: "Simon, are you asleep? could you not watch with me one hour?" Then he woke the others and said to the three: "Watch and pray, that you may not come into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

He returned to his solitary prayer, unhelped by his disciples, but victorious. Now he prayed: "Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, let Thy will be done!" Again he came to the three, but again they were asleep, and did not know what to say.

A third time he withdrew and prayed the prayer of complete submission. When he came back to the sleepers he said to them sadly: "You can sleep on now. The hour is come. The Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners."

As they all rose, bewildered and abashed, there was a noise in the garden. They were discovered. A band of men, temple servants, and soldiers from the castle of Antonia, all

HIS LAST NIGHT ON EARTH 281

armed, and some of the priests, temple captains and elders, were coming towards them, led by Judas. Judas had arranged to kiss his Master, and by that sign to show the officers which he was. He stepped up to Jesus, and said: "How are you, Rabbi?" Jesus said: "Comrade, what you have come for——" He was going to say "do," but in a moment the rough hands were upon him, and he was arrested. Peter, in a rather foolish misunderstanding of his Master's words, had brought a sword with him, and now in sudden anger he drew it and struck at one of the men, whose name was Malchus. The blow missed the head, but sheared off the ear. Jesus, who would do nothing to protect himself, hastened to save his poor silly follower. In a moment the angry men would have overpowered Peter and might have cut down the rest, thinking that they were armed. "Allow me," he said to those who were gagging him, and reached out that healing hand to the wounded man. The ear was restored. Then he said to them all: "Put up the sword. They who take it shall perish by it"—one of the greatest and most far-reaching of all his sayings. Then he said how legions of angels would be sent to deliver him, if it were the will of God. But he would face what was coming in order to fulfil his mission. Then

with calm majesty he asked the posse of soldiers and officers why they had come out to him with swords and clubs. He had been teaching daily in the temple, and they did not touch him. A panic seized them all. They knew that they were in presence of a supernatural power, and they fell back as if they had been stricken. The eleven disciples in their terror fled. Jesus could also have fled, but that did not become him, nor did he intend to avoid the approaching doom.

The soldiers rose again to do their duty; and just then appeared a young man, who unobserved had followed into the garden in his night-dress. This was probably John Mark, who had risen from bed to see what would happen to the Master. The soldiers seized the bed-garment, and Mark left it behind and fled.

It seems that Mark inserts this note (Mark xiv. 51, 52), very much as Lippo Lippi puts his own portrait into a famous picture of the Nativity at Florence. It is the modest mark of authorship. Mark was called "stump-fingered" in after years; and it is thought that his fingers may have been cut off in the fray that night.

Close by the garden was the villa known as "The booths of the sons of Annas." Annas had been high priest from A.D. 6 to 15, and was

then followed by his four sons and his son-in-law, John Caiaphas, who was high priest now. As the Sanhedrin could not sit till daybreak, Jesus was taken to the house of Annas; and John, who was known to the old priest, recovering from the panic, entered the house with the troops. Peter also came to the gate to see what would happen. John secured the admission of Peter into the courtyard, where a fire had been kindled.

Annas began to ask Jesus about his disciples and his teaching. But Jesus only said that he had taught openly, and his hearers could witness what he had taught. On this a servant gave him a blow in the face, saying: "How dare you answer the high priest so?" "If I spoke evil, say what it was," answered Jesus, "if well, why do you strike me?"

Meanwhile Peter had been charged by the portress of the house with being one of the disciples, and in his fear he had denied it. Then, when he came in and stood by the fire, another girl said that he was a follower of Jesus, and when he denied again, one of the men, a relative of Malchus, recognized him, and said that his very way of speaking—his Galilean accent—showed that it was so. Then Peter began to curse and to swear, and said: "I know not the man." At that moment Jesus

from the inner room turned and looked at him. Peter remembered that saying that before cock-crow he would three times deny his Master. In bitter shame he wrapped his cloak over his head, and went out and wept bitterly.

Meanwhile the traitor Judas himself, finding that Jesus was not delivered by angels, but was likely to be condemned, repented. Hurrying to the high priests and elders who were now assembling for the fateful Sanhedrin in the temple buildings, he returned the thirty pieces of silver, confessing that he had betrayed the innocent. They would not take it back: it was accursed money. Judas threw it down in the temple shrine, and went out and hanged himself. The money was used to buy a burial place for strangers.

Thus ended the last night of Jesus on earth.

CHAPTER XXX

THE TRIAL

As soon as the day began to glimmer—Friday, that last day of the life of Jesus—the council of the Sanhedrin assembled in the Hall of Hewn Stone, a court-house close to the part of the temple which was called the Holy of Holies. At the west end of the court sat Caiaphas the high priest, and by his side four others, who formed what we should call the Bench. Here was the form of law for the trial of the prisoner—who was really condemned before the court assembled. But not only was justice set at naught, every rule and precedent of that court was made to bend, in order to get a charge against Jesus which could be presented to the Roman governor.

It was not lawful to hold a court on the feast day. Then, according to the merciful Jewish usage, if a sentence of death was passed, the judges were obliged to mourn and fast for the day, and the execution must be delayed till the following day. But the high



THE HERO OF HEROES

priests, Sadducees, Pharisees, Scribes and elders, the supreme council of Judaism, were bent upon one thing only, to get a verdict of condemnation against their greatest countryman from the Roman governor who held the power of life and death.

This early and irregular meeting in the Hall of Hewn Stone was not a trial in any true sense; it was an act of fierce and bitter hatred against Jesus, the Son of God.

Jesus was brought by the officers and soldiers from the house of Annas, across the Kedron and up the hill of Zion, into the temple court, and before Caiaphas and his assessors. The whole council began at once to seek for witness against him, but they could not find it. The charge of sabbath-breaking, or of eating with sinners, would mean nothing to Pilate. The witnesses that were called contradicted each other. At last several agreed in reporting a saying of Jesus which dated from three years ago, the saying recorded by John (ii. 19): "I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another that is made without hands." This sounded like the threat of an anarchist! But the witnesses could not stand examination. Jesus had really said: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up"—but the

sensible hearers understood that by the temple he meant his body, which, if destroyed, would be raised up on the third day. Then, with an air of solemnity, Caiaphas rose and stood forth and said to Jesus: "What do you answer to these charges?" But Jesus looked quietly in his face and said nothing. That dignified silence completely baffled the court.

As no charge could be sustained against him, the only thing was to make him commit himself. Caiaphas therefore put him on oath to answer a plain question: "Are you the Messiah, the son of the Blessed?" To refuse to answer that adjuration would have been the same as to say no. Jesus therefore said simply: "I am." There was a pause, and then this bound and apparently helpless prisoner added: "And you shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven."

Nothing could be plainer than this. Jesus said that he was the Christ, and that he would come as the Lord and the Judge of the earth. Judaism was waiting and watching for Messiah, and there he stood before the supreme council of the nation.

Then occurred the most appalling crime ever perpetrated on earth. The high priest of Judaism treated this announcement of the

truth as blasphemy. He tore his clothes, to express his feigned horror and indignation. He turned to the court and said, "What do you need more?" And they immediately agreed that he was worthy of death.

He had told them the truth, and said who he was. And for that they would kill him. Then occurred an awful scene. These reverend-looking men, mad with hatred, and beside themselves with their own deliberate wickedness, attacked the prisoner before them—they spat on him, they hit him, they covered his head and shrieked, "Prophesy who hit you." And the officers, following the example of their masters, struck him with their rods and with the palms of their hands.

It is an appalling moment in human history. And there were two at least in that company, Joseph of Arimathea, and Nicodemus, who knew the injustice which was being committed, and had not the courage to protest.

But here was a charge to bring before Pilate, which they made to seem worse by their violence and passion. The great trouble of the Roman Government was that Messiahs were constantly appearing and bringing the crowd into opposition to the authorities. They would hurry Jesus before Pilate and say that he was by his own confession a Messiah, and they

would declare that he was a Messiah of the accustomed sort.

Pilate was the procurator of the province. He had come up from Cæsarea to keep order in Jerusalem during the feast, and was in the magnificent prætorium, west of the temple, the official residence. He was a hard, imperious man, who hated the superstitions of the Jews. He had scandalized them by planting the Roman insignia on the citadel. When some of the people had protested against his action in making a better water supply, he had told his soldiers to cudgel them to death. Not long before, some Galileans who had come up to sacrifice in the temple had been by his order put to death, so that their blood mixed with that of their sacrifices. Thus the Jews hated and feared him.

Early as it was, Pilate was already up; for the Romans did all their day's business in the early morning. Jesus was carried to the prætorium by the undignified Sanhedrin. These scrupulous Jews, bent on the greatest crime in history, would not enter the prætorium itself, "lest they should be defiled" on that holy day! But there was a tessellated pavement in front of the palace; and Pilate humoured their prejudices by coming out to them to meet their demand. When he saw the prisoner and the

eager accusers, he said: "What is the charge?" Here pride met pride. The haughty Sanhedrists said: "If he were not an evildoer we should not have brought him!" "Very well," said the governor in scorn, "then judge him yourselves." "But," they replied, "the Roman law does not allow us to pass the capital sentence."

Capital sentence! Pilate realized that these men wanted to kill their own countryman. He insisted on them telling him the charge. Then they said: "We found him pretending to be Messiah, exciting the people, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar." The first point was right; but we know how false the rest was.

Pilate felt that it was false, and, with the Roman instinct for justice, he took the prisoner within the palace, where the Jews would not enter, and said to him: "Are you the King of the Jews?" for such every Messiah claimed to be. Jesus said: "Is that your own question, or is it suggested by the others?" Pilate said: "I am no Jew. You are charged by your own people. What have you done?" Then Jesus told the Roman governor that his kingdom was not of this world, but spiritual, that he was a King in the sense that he was the witness of truth, and that every one who cared for truth would listen to him. Pilate

saw at once that he was not dealing with an anarchist, or a fanatical Messiah claiming to be the political leader of the people, but with a thinker, perhaps a dreamer, like the Stoic philosophers who claimed to be kings because they ruled themselves and were independent of earthly governments.

Convinced of this and saying idly, "What is truth?" he went out to the waiting Jews and said: "I find no crime in him." The Jews glowered their wrath and disappointment. And Pilate thought he might escape from an awkward situation by sending the prisoner to Herod. Jesus had come from Galilee, and the Galilean Tetrarch was in Jerusalem for the feast, close at hand. Herod was interested to see his notorious subject. He thought he might witness a miracle, and plied the prisoner with questions. But he could not get so much as a word from him, though the priests and Scribes were shouting their accusations and abuse against him. The disappointed tetrarch and his soldiers then began to mock him. They put on him a purple military cloak, and sent him back in scorn to Pilate. But there was no ground of condemnation.

Pilate was now in perplexity. He saw that Jesus was innocent, but he saw that the Jews were mad with hate. He feebly tried to make

a compromise. "I will chastise him," he said, "and let him go!" Just then the demand was made by the people for the release of a prisoner; the Government always released one at the feast. And Pilate thought that he might release Jesus. Strange to say, there was another Jesus under arrest, the son of a Rabbi, who had fallen into evil courses, and had been condemned as a robber and a murderer. "I will release one of these to you," said Pilate. "Shall it be Jesus Barabbas, or Jesus the King of the Jews?"

Pilate was by now nervous and anxious. His wife, Claudia Procula, sent a message to him saying that she had had a dream about Jesus, and she entreated her husband not to do anything with him, for he was innocent. Surely the people would choose the obviously innocent man, and not the certainly guilty? But the authorities cowed the people, and all cried out for the release of the robber and murderer.

Pilate, frustrated in this hope, had water brought to him, and washed his hands in the presence of all, to show that he was innocent of the murderous feeling that was in the hearts of the Jews. But they cried out that they would bear the guilt and the penalty, if there was any: "His blood be upon our heads and

on our children!" "Crucify him!" they now began to shout. At the siege of Jerusalem, forty years after, these men and their children paid the penalty, when the Romans crucified so many of them that "space was wanting for the crosses, and crosses for the bodies."

The blame now rested on the Jews and their rulers, but they could not crucify him unless Pilate gave his consent, and Pilate felt more sure every moment that he ought not to give it. He gave orders for the scourging of Jesus, hoping that the sight would satisfy his enemies. Arrayed in the purple robe, and crowned now with a hastily twisted crown of thorns, Jesus was scourged by the soldiers, who mocked him with a jesting obeisance: "Hail, King of the Jews." When this was done the sufferer, silent and dignified, in the attire of mockery, was brought out again to the pavement; Pilate thought that the sight would wake pity and compunction in those savage hearts. "Look at the man," he said, as if to say, "You can see that there is no harm or danger in him."

But they shrieked out, "Crucify him." "Do it yourselves," said Pilate; "I find no crime in him." "He made himself the Son of God," shouted the Jews; "he must die." This word frightened Pilate. Son of God! Could this be a god, who in such absolute silence, patience,

and dignity, bore the violence and hate of his fellows? In fear, he took Jesus back into the palace, and said to him: "Where do you come from?" But the calm, brave lips said nothing. "Won't you answer?" said Pilate. "Don't you know that I can let you go or send you to the Cross?"

Then the patient lips opened: "You would have no power against me unless it were given to you from above; but your sin is less than that of the high priest who delivered me to you."

Pilate now went out determined to release this majestic and divine prisoner who had come into his hands. But the Jews had an argument in reserve. "If you release him you are no friend of Cæsar's; every one that claims to be king speaks against Cæsar." Under the Emperor Tiberius many men every year lost their lives on the mere suspicion of having spoken against Cæsar. A breath carried to Rome that Pilate was no friend of Cæsar's might bring him to immediate death without appeal.

In abject fear for his own life Pilate stifled his conscience. Mounting the chair of judgment which was placed on the pavement, he gave his lawless sentence. It was only six o'clock even now. It was the Passover Day

which had begun just twelve hours ago. Pointing to Jesus, he said: "Look at your king." And the Jews cried: "Crucify him." "Shall I crucify your king?" asked Pilate. The chief priests answered: "We have no king but Cæsar."

And Pilate gave sentence that he should be crucified.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE CROSS

THERE was much brutality in the Romans, as there was a fanatical hatred in the Jews. No sooner was the unjust sentence passed, than the soldiers began to treat Jesus in the most heartless way. They seized him and dragged him into the palace, and gathered together the whole cohort to make sport of him. In the mockery of the purple robe and the crown of thorns, with a rod in his hand as a sceptre, he was jeered at as a king. They knelt before him, and said: "Hail, King of the Jews." Then they rose and spat on him; and took the rod out of his hand to beat his thorn-crowned head. And he said no word, but patiently endured it all.

Then they selected a cross from the stock which was kept in the prætorium for the punishment of slaves, and told him that he must carry it. Immediately they set off through the long street, which has ever since been called the *Via*

Dolorosa, or Sorrowful Way, to a place outside the city walls where criminals were executed. There were two bandits waiting to be executed, and the soldiers thought that they might crucify all three together, though it *was* the day of the feast. If the bandits had been executed that day alone the Jews would have been furious, but they were so eager to get rid of Jesus, and to finish the feast and prepare for the sabbath, that they did not mind the criminals suffering too.

As they marched through the street, a soldier carried before each of the condemned a board, on which was written his name and his offence.

For Jesus there was a name, but no offence. The only crime urged against him before Pilate was that he claimed to be Messiah, the long-expected king of the Jews. The governor therefore ordered this to be written on the board in Latin, Hebrew, and Greek: "Jesus the Nazarene, King of the Jews." The Jewish authorities wished to alter it and write: "He said he was King of the Jews." But Pilate insisted on keeping the charge as he made it.

Meanwhile the apostles had all left their Lord; John apparently had gone to help and comfort Mary; but all were in hiding. As Jesus trudged down the street, sinking under the

weight of the cross, there was no friend by him. He was forsaken and alone.

Contrary to custom, the rulers went with the procession, to see the One they hated die. And of course a crowd gathered and followed. To their honour be it said, there were women in that crowd whose hearts were touched with pity for Jesus; they beat their breasts and mourned aloud. This drew from him his last words about Jerusalem. He turned and said: "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but for yourselves and for your children. The days are coming when they will say, Happy are the childless! when they will call on the mountains to fall on them and hide them. These things they do while the tree is yet green; what will happen when it is withered and dry?"

He foresaw the dread days when Jerusalem would fall and the crosses would be laden with the condemned Jews, all round the city. Of himself he did not think.

It was not very far to Golgotha, the Place of the Skull, where criminals suffered. If that spot was what is now shown as the Holy Sepulchre, he passed through the gate in the wall which has since been discovered, and is shown in the centre of a convent. If the spot is the hill outside the Damascus Gate, known as Jeremiah's Grotto, which looks not unlike a

human skull, the walk was a little longer. But as they passed through the gate, Jesus was so faint that he sank under the cross. The soldiers seized on a Jew who was entering the city, and made him carry the cross for Jesus. This was Simon from Cyrene in North Africa. His sons were afterwards known as Christians (Rom. xvi. 13), and he must have been won to Jesus by bearing his cross. Jesus was so exhausted that they had to carry him the rest of the way to the Place of the Skull.

It was now nine o'clock in the morning; and we must look on, though with breaking hearts, and see what they did with Jesus. Crucifixion was not only the most shameful, but also the most torturing, death ever invented by the cruelty of man. Our word "excruciating" is derived from the cross; the worst agony we can imagine is compared to the cross. The sufferer was either impaled on an upright stake, or stretched on a cross of this shape **X**,¹ or nailed with outstretched arms to a cross of this shape **T**, and sometimes, as in this instance, the cross, called *crux immissa*, was of this shape **+**, that the board with the accusation might be nailed on the upright beam above the transom. The sufferer would be left to hang in agony for two or three days, until death mercifully relieved him.

¹ On such St. Andrew was crucified at Patræ.

Four soldiers were told off to nail Jesus to his cross. His arms were stretched along the transom, and nails were driven through the palms; the body was partly supported by a peg in the middle; the feet were tied to the upright beam, or perhaps, as Luke says, secured with a nail, like the hands.

In the torture of this first act it was customary to give the sufferer a draught of a mixture which might deaden the pain. There was a society of ladies in Jerusalem who provided such narcotics for criminals. A cup of myrrh and wine was put, by this thought of mercy, to the lips of Jesus. But he would not take it. He had some words yet to speak, and would not be stupened in order to lessen his pain.

"I was ever a fighter: so, one fight more,
The best and the last!

I should hate that death bandaged my eyes, and forbore,
And bade me creep past."

As the soldiers, heartless enough no doubt, did their work, and raised the cross, with him now nailed to it, to plant it in the ground, he said nothing to them, but spoke to God for them: "*Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.*"

They were indeed carrying out the greatest deed ever done—the redemptive sacrifice by which men could be forgiven and reconciled to God.

This they could not understand. They proceeded, according to custom, to divide the clothes of the sufferer, one taking the cloak, another the girdle, another the turban, the fourth the sandals. But the tunic was that of the Galilean peasant, woven throughout. They proposed to cast lots for it, and thus fulfilled a saying in Ps. xxii. 18 which referred to the suffering of Messiah.

Now that the cross was reared and they were secure of their victim, the Jewish priests and Rabbis were brutal enough to jeer at him. Those jeers are recorded, to the shame of our humanity. They are worth remembering, for they contain truths much more wonderful than they who uttered them knew: "You, who can pull down the temple and build it again in three days, save yourself by coming down from the cross."

On the third day he would show how true his words were in the sense in which he meant them.

"Others he saved: himself he cannot save." That was true, and his highest glory. "He is king of Israel--let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him." But if he had come down then, that sacrifice for sin would not have been offered on which the salvation of the world depended. "He has set his trust on God, let him rescue him now if

he desires him, for he said, I am God's Son. Yes, and in that moment he was showing himself to be what he said he was. He was God's Son dying for men.

Thus these misguided men poured out their own shame, and bore unwilling witness to the Saviour whom they were slaying.

Meanwhile the soldiers, thirsty with their exertions, were drinking their vinegar-water *posca* as it was called, and they joined with the priests and the Rabbis in their jeers, and drank the health of the King on the cross in mockery.

Even the two bandits hanging on the other two crosses were abusing him, saying: "If you are Messiah, show you are some good by saving yourself and us." But suddenly one of them, looking at the patient, suffering face, changed his tone, and said to his companion: "Do you not fear God, because you are in the same condemnation? And we deserve it for our bad deeds. But he never did anything wrong."

And he said, reading the inscription over the central cross: "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Swiftly from those dying lips came the promise: "*To-day you shall be with me in Paradise.*"

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THE CROSS

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achus to this penitent, and then a legend grew that he and his comrade had stopped the holy family on the flight to Egypt, and he, instead of robbing them, had taken up the little child and blessed him. I have seen in a Roman Catholic country a prayer addressed to Drumachus for his intercession with Jesus! In this way legend and superstition attempt to hide the truth. But this word from the Cross is one of the greatest of our possessions.

It shows us how swift the gift of pardon follows on penitence, and it shows that the soul that passes out of the body believing in Jesus enters at once into that blessed world, the bliss of which is to be with him for ever.

The hours of agony crept on. And now John ventured to steal to the scene of his Master's death. With him came Salome, his mother, and Mary the mother of Jesus, also Mary the wife of Cleopas, and Mary of Magdala and Bethany. They drew near to the cross, and Jesus saw them. He wished to provide for his mother, and to show that she no longer stood to him as mother; for her motherhood had been accomplished in those early days. "*Woman, behold your son,*" he said; and then to John: "*Behold your mother.*" Then the beloved disciple took Mary to his home and treated her ever after as his mother.

It was now twelve o'clock. Sometimes in Palestine a sirocco blows from the desert, and fills the air with fine sand, so that the sun is hidden and it becomes like night. One of these storms came on now, and for three hours, while Jesus was dying, it was dark. In his soul there was a darkness darker than night. For he had come to the dread moment when he must make the sacrifice for the sin of the world. He took the world's sin upon himself. He sank under it, he was lost in it. In that awful experience God withdrew from him, that he might offer the sacrifice which he alone, being sinless, could offer. This is the act which we call the Propitiation. If God had not withdrawn from him, there would have been no real suffering. All his life God had been with him (Acts x. 38). Up to the last he said he was not alone, for God was with him (John xvi. 32). But now for that awful moment God withdrew from him. The anguish of God was equal to the anguish of Jesus in that separation, which, though it was but for a moment, seemed like Eternity. The cry went up from the Cross—

"My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"

The Hebrew for "My God!" is *Eli*, and some of the bystanders thought that he was

calling for Elias, and said: "Let us see whether Elias [*i. e.* Elijah] will come to him."

No one can ever tell the anguish of that moment. We only know that it broke his heart. For the "water and the blood" which the spear drew from the dead body were the symptom of a heart that had literally broken. But he did not die in the horror of darkness. He came through it victorious. The body was dying, and he sighed: "*I thirst.*" Some of the bystanders dipped a sponge in the soldiers' *posca*, or vinegar-water, and raised it on a hyssop stalk to his lips. The momentary refreshment enabled him to lift up his voice, and to say, in the words of Ps. xxxi. 5, but with his own reassured sense of his Father's return to him: "*Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit.*" The darkness had passed, the ransom was paid, the mission of his life was over, the world's redemption was won. He said: "*It is finished,*" and died.

At that moment there was a tremor of earthquake, such as often visits Palestine. There is a story in the Talmud that forty years before the destruction of Jerusalem, that is, at this time, the doors of the temple opened of their own accord. The great curtain before the Holy of Holies, which was only entered by

the high priest, and by him only on the day of atonement, was torn.

It was three o'clock in the afternoon, and at six the Paschal sabbath would begin. The centurion of the Roman soldiers cried out: "Surely this was God's son," and even the careless people turned back to Jerusalem awestruck and weeping.

This was the slaying of the Paschal Lamb, the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world.

The Jewish law could not allow the bodies to remain on the crosses on the sabbath. It was necessary, therefore, to dispatch the sufferers. The legs of the two bandits were broken, and they died. Jesus was dead, and a soldier, to whom legend gave the name of Longinus, pierced the dead heart with a spear. He, it is said, became a Christian.

Then two members of the Sanhedrin showed that they had secretly believed in Jesus, though they feared to confess him. Joseph of Arimathea offered the governor money for the dead body, but Pilate gave it to him, and he carried it to a new tomb which he had prepared for himself in a neighbouring garden. And Nicodemus brought a hundred pounds of myrrh and aloes to embalm the body. The women from

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Galilee saw where the body was laid. And now the night fell and the sabbath began. They would not break the sabbath even to visit his tomb; and he kept the sabbath in the sepulchre.

He was crucified, dead, and buried.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE RESURRECTION

BUT the third day he rose again from the dead. Very early in the morning which we call Sunday, or the Lord's Day, because of the events which I am now going to describe, the women made their way to the tomb. There was Mary of Magdala and of Bethany; there was Joanna; and there was Mary the mother of James. They had with them sweet unguents to cover the body of Jesus, not knowing that Nicodemus, that secret disciple, had brought that great supply on Friday evening. Before the entrance of the rocky cave in which Joseph had laid the body a huge slab of stone was run in a groove, to form the door. It was too heavy for women to move. And as in the dusk of dawn they approached the place, they asked one another who would roll away the slab, that they might enter the sepulchral chamber. But as they reached the spot, to their astonishment they found the door opened.

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J.C.
"BRIGHT SHINING FORMS WERE THERE . . . SAYING THAT
JESUS HAD RISEN AND THE PLACE WAS EMPTY"

[To face p. 308]

Eagerly they entered to find the sacred body. But instead of the dead body they were met by a vision of angels. Yes, bright shining forms were there and spoke to them, saying that Jesus had risen, and the place was empty. Hastily Mary of Magdala ran to the house where Peter and the apostles were. "The body is not in the tomb," she cried, "where is it?" Peter, excited beyond measure, started for the garden, and John ran after him and arrived first. The other women had gone, but Mary of Magdala followed the two apostles. John looked in at the door, and, peering into the gloom, saw the linen clothes in which the body had been wrapped fallen to the ground, as if the body had evaporated out of them. Peter, coming up, ran right into the rocky chamber, and noticed not only the shroud, but the napkin which had been spread on the dead face, lying apart where the head had been, as if it were carefully folded, because it was no longer needed. John now entered the tomb, and the truth dawned upon his heart. Words of Jesus about rising on the third day rushed back upon him. He had risen. The body had escaped from the grave as a spiritual body, leaving nothing behind but the grave-clothes. The two apostles, bewildered, returned to the rest, and found the women arrived, trying in

vain to make them believe that angels had announced his issue from the tomb.

Meanwhile Mary of Magdala remained at the door of the tomb weeping. She stooped down, and saw through her tears the two white-robed forms, one at the head and the other at the foot of the empty cerements. They spoke: "Woman, why do you weep?" "Because they have taken away my Lord," she sobbed, "and I know not where they have laid him." She did not, in her grief and bewilderment, know that the two forms were spirits, and not flesh and blood. She turned round, and there was some one else standing behind her, who put to her the same question: "Why do you weep?" She thought it was the gardener of Joseph of Arimathea. "Sir," she exclaimed, "if you have carried him away, tell me where you have placed him, and I will fetch him." But it was not the gardener; it was the risen Jesus. He spoke her name: "Mary," and there was no mistaking his voice. "Rabboni!" she cried, which is the Hebrew for "my Teacher!" She threw herself at his feet, the feet which she had washed with her tears and wiped with her hair, and would have held them. But he forbade her. "Go to my brethren," he said, "and tell them that I am going up to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God."

Mary now walked triumphantly back to tell the company of disciples that she had seen and talked with the Lord. But it seemed incredible.

Before Mary arrived, two of the number, Cleopas (Alphæus) and another, who might have been Luke, set off for a village seven or eight miles south-west of Jerusalem named Emmaus (now El-Khamasa). As they talked about what had happened, a stranger joined their company. They did not know him; and when he asked them what they were talking about so eagerly, they stood still and turned their sad faces to him. So full were they of all that had happened that Cleopas said: "You must live alone in Jerusalem not to know what has been happening in these days." "What things?" asked the stranger. "All about Jesus of Nazareth, the prophet, whom the rulers crucified. We hoped he was going to be the redeemer of Israel. Three days have passed, and the women at the grave this morning said that the body was not there, and angels said that he is living. Some of our company went to the tomb, and found it empty, but did not see him."

Then the stranger took them to task for their want of sense and slowness of understanding. He began to show out of the Law of Moses (Deut. xviii. 15), and out of the Prophets (Is.

liii.) and the Psalms (xxii.) how Messiah was to come and to suffer for the world before entering into his glory.

They were now at Emmaus, and when Jesus seemed as if he would go on alone, they said, "Abide with us, for it is towards evening, and the day is far spent." He went into the house with them, and they reclined at the table. Then the stranger, took the bread and blessed it and broke it and distributed it to them; recalling the meal on the mountain-side, and other meals which the Master had taken with his disciples, they suddenly recognized that the stranger was Jesus. But with the recognition he vanished from their eyes. And they said, "Was not our heart burning within us" (or, as one MS. says, "veiled within us") "as he spoke with us on the road and opened to us the Scriptures?"

Late as it was, they set off back for Jerusalem. That Sunday evening the apostles and other disciples were assembled in a room with closed doors. They were afraid of the authorities, for the soldiers who had been set to guard the tomb, on finding that Jesus had vanished from it, had been ordered to say that the apostles had stolen the body away. When the two entered they were told that Peter had seen Jesus, and they told the rest how they had met

him on the road, and recognized him in the bread-breaking.

As they were talking—though the doors were closed—there was Jesus standing in the midst of them, with the words of greeting on his lips: "Peace to you!" Their hearts fluttered and they were afraid, as men are when they see ghosts. But he calmed them and said: "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your minds?" Then he showed them his hands and his feet and his side, and told them to touch him, and see that his body was still flesh and bone. He ate a little broiled fish. And they were all convinced that he was alive, that he had risen from the dead. Then they broke out into joy. And he put it beyond question by repeating to them what he had said to Peter and the rest long ago (Matt. xviii. 18). "As the Father has sent me," he said, "I also send you." Then he breathed on them as a sign of the Spirit that he would give to them, and said: "Receive the Holy Ghost. Whosoever sins you remit they are remitted to them; whose you retain, they are retained."

There could be no doubt that this was Jesus himself who had before his death given to his disciples this task of representing him and doing his work in the world.

Now it happened that one of the eleven, the

Twin, or, as we call him, Thomas, was absent that night, and when he heard what had occurred he would not believe. Unless he put his finger into the nail-prints and his hand into the spear-wound he would not believe. For a week they all went about their work and on the next Sunday they assembled again, Thomas with them, and the door shut as before. Again Jesus appeared with the greeting : "Peace to you!" and said at once to Thomas : "Put out your finger and see my hands, and put out your hand and thrust it into my side, and be not faithless, but believing." Then Thomas uttered the great cry : "My Lord and my God," and Jesus said, speaking, as it were, to us all : "Because you have seen me you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe."

In this way he showed that he wished us all, who read about him and know him in the spirit, to believe in him as they did who saw him in the flesh.

A week had passed since the resurrection, and now for five weeks more the risen Lord showed himself under different conditions until the disciples were fully and firmly convinced that he was living, and would live and be with them in the work which he had left them to do. These appearances are mentioned by St. Paul

in 1 Cor. xv., and when he wrote, thirty years after the event, he said that there were many then living who had seen him; and, indeed, Paul himself had seen him on the road to Damascus.

Some of the appearances were in Galilee. The eleven apostles had been away from their homes for about six months, and they understood that they were to return to the old familiar scenes, at least for a few weeks, in order that the risen Lord might show himself there. When they were back in Capernaum it was necessary for them to earn their bread. One day Peter and Thomas, and Nathanael the son of Talmai, James and John, and two others unnamed went out fishing on the lake. All night they were out and caught nothing. Thinking of the time when they were first called, and the nets nearly broke with the weight of the fish which were caught at the Master's word, in the dawn they saw a figure on the shore. The stranger spoke pleasantly: "I suppose you have not a relish, my men, have you?" He meant, of course, some fish to eat with the bread. "No," they answered. "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some," he said. They did so, and the net was immediately heavy with fish. John at once said to Peter: "It is the Lord." Peter,

who had stripped off his sleeveless tunic to haul the ropes, slipped it on again, and plunged into the water, swimming to the beach a hundred yards away. The rest followed with the net. There they saw a brazier, and fish broiling, and bread. Jesus—for it was he—bade them bring fish from the net. They laid the gleaming fishes on the beach, one hundred and fifty-three. "Now we will breakfast," said Jesus, and no one dared to ask who he was. He divided the food among them; and then he put to Peter a searching question. "Do you care for me more than these?" he asked. "Yes, Lord," he answered, "you know I love you." "Feed my lambs," said Jesus. Again Jesus said: "Do you care for me?" Peter replied as before. Jesus said: "Shepherd my young sheep." Then a third time Jesus asked the question: "Simon, son of Jonas, do you love me?" Peter remembered his three denials of his Lord, and was grieved. "You know everything," he pleaded; "you are acquainted with my love." Again Jesus said: "Feed my young sheep!" And then he told him how, later on, his disciple would follow him by being crucified. Peter asked what would happen to John. Jesus gave the curious answer: "If I will that he remain till I come, that does not concern you!" They thought he meant that John should not die; and

four hundred years later men said that John, who was buried in Ephesus, was alive, and the grave heaved with his breathing.

Thus he gave them the commission for the future. Another day on the familiar mountain, Kurûn Hattin, they thought they saw him—and they knew that they received his orders to go unto all nations and make men disciples like themselves, baptizing them in the name of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, teaching them to keep all his commandments. And this word was perfectly clear: "I am with you all the days until the end of the world."

Once he appeared to a congregation of five hundred, and again to his brother James. The last of the appearances was at Jerusalem; they had gone up for the Feast of Pentecost. He came to them and told them that the Spirit would come upon them to teach them what to do. Then he led them out to Bethany, and on the Mount of Olives parted from them. A cloud received him from their eyes. Gazing up into the sky and wondering, they were told by two men in white dresses that he would come again as he had gone.

They returned to the upper room in Jerusalem full of joy and expectation. For days they could do nothing but appear in the temple praising God. And then in that upper room,

on the day of Pentecost, they received, according to the promise of Jesus, the gift of the Holy Spirit, by which Jesus came to them in power to accomplish the work which he had given them to do.

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CHAPTER XXXIII

HOW THE LIFE OF JESUS CONTINUES

THE Acts of the Apostles opens by saying that the story which we have now finished was only what Jesus "began to do and to teach" up to the time of his apparent departure out of the world. But by the coming of the Holy Spirit his life in the world continued and grew, and is still continuing and growing. No life of Jesus can be completely written. But I may in a closing chapter show you how and where you can find that life still.

This is the meaning of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit that came at Pentecost: Jesus himself comes to those who believe in him and put their trust in him. He comes, not the thought of him, or the memory of him only, not the love to him or the wish to serve him only, but he himself comes. He enters the believing heart, a spiritual power, that makes it anew, forgives and cleanses, strengthens and keeps, and brings the life and character into harmony with himself. Thus wherever there is a true

believer, Jesus is living and carrying on his holy and saving life in the world. This is what he said: "Abide in me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in me . . . without me ye can do nothing" (John xv. 4, 5). Thus when Paul saw Jesus on the way to Damascus and believed in him, he described what happened in this way: "when it pleased God to reveal His Son in me." And Jesus lived in him in such a way that Paul said, "The life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me. It is no longer I that live, but Christ which liveth in me."

From the time of Paul until now there have never been wanting those in whom Jesus has thus lived. Next to the four Gospels there is nothing in the world so interesting as the story of those in whom Jesus has lived. Polycarp and Ignatius, Perpetua and the slave-girl Blandina, show us Jesus living in them in the first century. Men like William Wilberforce, or General Gordon, or Phillips Brooks, show us Jesus living in them in the nineteenth century. I must tell you a story about the last. Phillips Brooks was the Bishop of Boston. He died in 1893. He was a giant in body, and a giant

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in mind, and the greatest preacher in America. One day he was crossing the Atlantic. Some one passing his state-room heard a voice, and overheard the words. The bishop was talking to Jesus, and this was what he said: "Lord Jesus, thou hast filled my life with joy and peace, and to look into thy face is earth's most exquisite delight."

When you find a great and strong man like this talking to Jesus—not as to some one that can be seen, but as to a spiritual presence in his own heart,—you see what it is to say that Jesus is living his life amongst men.

Already one-third of the human race owns Jesus as its religious teacher and leader. But more than this, in every part of the world the other religions begin to recognize in him the One they have always wanted. Slow as we have been in making known the story of Jesus to the nations, wherever that story is told men and women turn to him, and believe, and he begins to live in them. There is hardly a branch of the human family now in which Jesus is not living by the faith that human hearts place in him. We who believe in him know that this will go on until at his name every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess that he is Lord.

An Englishman in India was watching not

long ago the great ceremonial in a Hindoo temple. When it was over he said to the priest: "How long has this worship been going on?" "Two thousand five hundred years," was the reply. "And I suppose," said the Englishman, "it will go on for another two thousand five hundred years?" The priest said: "No!" "And why?" asked the Englishman. Then the priest raised his eyes, and spread out his hands, and said one word: "Jesus."

Every one now that thinks can see the truth of what Jesus said in the days of his flesh. He dropped the seed into the soil of the earth, and then apparently went away. But the earth brings forth of herself, first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. At last the harvest will come, and all the full shocks of corn will be garnered in the kingdom of the Father (Mark iv. 26-29).

We do not know how far off the harvest is, nor how it will come. But this is plain, you who have been reading this life can believe in him, and by that faith he can begin to live in you, and your life can be a step towards the harvest: yes, you can hasten the harvest; for the harvest will come when the story of Jesus has been told to all the nations of the earth.

But, strange to say, you can see the life of

Jesus going on, even apart from those who fully and really believe in him. His ideas work in the world everywhere. Churches spring up to express those ideas, and to carry out his purpose. Sometimes those Churches become so corrupt that they seem rather to crush his ideas and to hinder his work. In his sacred name things are done which he forbids; lies are told; cruelties are practised; and Churches stained with these sins become hateful to the world. As he said, when the salt loses its savour, it is good for nothing but to be trodden under the feet of men. But when the Church betrays him, his work runs into other channels, and his life is lived in those whom the Church condemns. We have had a wonderful example of this in the life of Leo Tolstoi. The great Russian writer seized on certain ideas of Jesus, and lived them out in his own life at great cost. He loved the poor; he worked with his hands; he threw off all the comforts and luxuries of his noble birth and station; finally, an old man, he left his home, to die in a strange place. The Church condemned him and cast him out, just as the Jews condemned Jesus. But in his books and in his example Jesus has made himself felt in the twentieth century, and shown how even a handful of grain from his garner may cover and change the world.

The laws are more just; mercy and pity to the suffering grow; men more and more devote their strength and their knowledge to help and to bless one another. The day seems to be coming when men will be free, when they will be able to earn their bread without fear, and to live with one another in harmony; when the nations will not learn war any more, but the great engines of destruction will be turned into instruments of help and blessing. The dawn of that day is in sight, though the morning skies are still lowering. There is a dove flying abroad over the waste of the waters of human passion and hate, and she bears in her bill a twig of olive.

It is in this, and the many other signs of the times which point in the same direction, that you can trace Jesus living in the world and carrying out the work which he began so quietly on the flower-clad hills of Galilee.

If he had lived in Galilee and died at Jerusalem, and the grave had held him, and nothing had come of his life and death, we should still have read the sweet story, and been thankful that once there had been a human life so good, a human voice so true, a human death so brave. But if Jesus had ceased to live on the cross, it is not likely that millions of people now would be called Christians, nor would the religion of

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the leading races of the world be his religion. But, as I have shown you, he continued to live at once, and never ceased. Glowing hearts, transfigured by his presence, have recognized him. Devoted followers, apostles, martyrs, saints, have always followed him and tried to carry out his purpose. No one in the world lives so really, so widely, so powerfully as Jesus.

When he spoke to the apostles he said he would come again. They thought he would come again just as he had been, their master, their friend, to reign over them and all the world. It was very natural that they should understand him in this way. But that wonderful story of Jesus which we call the Gospel according to St. John, written, we suppose, about seventy years after the Resurrection, shows that by that time his followers had begun to understand that he came again at once through the Spirit, and had been with them, as he said, ever since. The word which was used for this coming, *Parousia*, means Presence. He is present and will be present all the days until the end, as he said. But it also meant coming, or advent,¹ and the first believers were

¹ *Parousia* in the papyri is the term for a royal or official visit, equivalent to the Latin *adventus*.—Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, pp. 372-379.

right in judging from all he said, from the parables of the returning nobleman, the wheat and the tares, the ten virgins, and the sheep and the goats, that there will be an end. There will be a coming of Jesus in the clouds, with great glory. His earthly life will be finished; the Bridegroom will have won his Bride for ever; the Body, of which he is the Head, will be redeemed. The tale of the earth will be over; the life of the spiritual world where he now lives will be all in all. Then, and not till then, we shall understand why the earth was made, why men lived upon it, why Jesus came to save it. The glory of the result will explain everything.

Once Jesus spoke of those who should be counted worthy of the resurrection. We may ask and seek for ourselves that we may be of that number, for that will mean that we may live the life of Jesus for ever and ever.

His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and of the abundance of his life and glory there can be no end.

We call him justly the Hero of Heroes.

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